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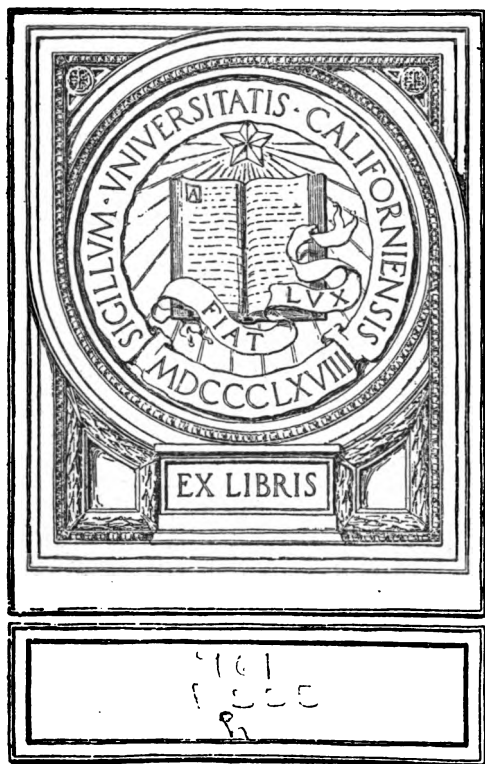
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*Homespun Yarns, While  
the Kettle and the Cricket Sing,*

T. A. Fitzgerald



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Univ. of  
California

TO MR.  
AND MRS.  
AND CHILDREN



**"While the Kettle and  
the Cricket Sing."**

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

# HOMESPUN YARNS

While the Kettle and  
the Cricket Sing . .

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

BY  
REV. T. A. FITZGERALD, O.F.M.



Dublin  
M. H. GILL & SON, LTD.,

1915

*First Impression* ... .. 1913  
*Second* " ... .. 1914  
*Third* " (*Enlarged*) 1915

PRINTED AND BOUND IN IRELAND



BY  
 M. H. GILL & SON, LTD.  
 DUBLIN

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
A LAMENT FOR THE FAIRIES . . .	5
A DUBLIN EXILE IN OLD CLONAKILTY . .	13
FLORADEL THE ROMANTIC . . .	35
THE JOYS, TEARS AND SMILES OF CHRISTMAS IN CONNEMARA . . .	41
ADVENTURES OF A CONVERT CURATE . .	64
THE LIFTING OF THE MIST . . .	75
DENNY MORAN'S AWAKENING . . .	94
WITH THE EMIGRANTS LEAVING IRELAND .	99
THE FAMOUS COOK STREET ELOPEMENT .	110
AN INTERRUPTED BENEDICTION . . .	131
BIDDY EARLY'S PRESCRIPTION . . .	136
ONE CHRISTMAS MORNING IN CLONAKILTY .	149
A TROPICAL FESTIVAL . . .	165
THE MESSAGE FROM THE OLD RATH . .	173
AN ANTIPODEAN GUM-LOG . . .	189
JEREMIAH DWYER, CITIZEN OF IRELAND .	196
A ROMANCE WITHOUT LOVE . . .	209
FROM BOMBAY TO SALTHILL . . .	217
PATSY CASEY'S CHRISTMAS BOX . . .	223
THE BLIND ORGANIST . . .	250





## A Lament for the Fairies



**I**T is a dark lowering day towards the end of December. The bleak leaden clouds obscure the whole sky, and lie like a pall over the earth. The lordly Shannon, swollen by the winter rain, rolls sulkily along not many yards from my window. It pours its roaring volume over the great eel-weir for which Athlone is famous, but the rushing waters are met by a raging storm which is tearing up from Clonmacnoise, and so the river under the weir is an angry battlefield where wind and flood foam and strive and writhe for supremacy. The dark water is scarred by frothy furrows which flash like tigers' teeth, and sea-like breakers roll and tumble, tossed by wind and tide. The Shannon, King of Irish rivers, and Scotch and English too, has risen in his might and invades the far-reaching plains which resemble the watery main. Here and there on patches of green are a few hardy Connacht cattle, hornless and fluffy-headed, heedless of the biting blast. The wind shrieks at the lattices and under doors and through key-holes, and now and then rushes down the chimney in fitful gusts sending clouds of turf smoke about the room. But for all

that, one feels cosy beside an Irish fireside especially on such a day as this. Yes, and you can wear a big top-coat, too, and not feel warm even before a blazing hearth. One is too comfortable to move except when the fire burns low and then you pile



on the sods again—for this is the great turf land of the west. It is a day for meditation, and as I sit before the dancing flames I ask myself: What is to become of our Irish fairies if things go on as they're going—if so-called civilisation keeps edging them out from their erstwhile realms—if dirty black coal takes the place of turf, if the smellful gas-stove

drives out the fragrant peat, if the cold electric light drives out the tallow candle which had to be snuffed and then told strange tidings of the dead, and, again, if the creamery drives out the dear old churn from the kitchen floor? Yes, I repeat it: What is to become of the fairies if this vandalism goes on? How can they stay and tolerate these innovations—these desecrations of their ancient realms? The dear old fairies are doomed and I have it on good authority—for I frequent old raths—that the Irish fairies have made up their minds with many a sigh which the birds have heard to depart to the lonely hills and silent backwoods of Ireland, there to think in sadness and sorrow on the days that were.

Now how could any self-respecting fairy live in a trim slate house, for fairies love the comfortable thatched farmhouse where swallows build and darling little mice gambol and sometimes fall into a bowl of whey that your sick grandmother is taking sitting up in bed, with her nightcap on, and the white strings hanging down each shoulder, for she's too feeble to tie them, poor thing!

Do not, I implore you, kind reader, except you're very ignorant, try to associate fairies with a coal fire. It is too dirty with its black smoke for those airy beings who love dancing flames and glowing sods that send sparks like tiny armies of red soldiers up the chimneys. Have we not often and often as little children seen wonderful things and wonderful faces in the broad heart of the burning turf fire? You can't see into a coal fire, but between the big sods on a turf fire you can discern regions of

golden palaces and gleaming warriors wearing burnished shields. And then the grateful fragrance of the turf smoke doesn't make you sneeze like the blast of grimy smoke from a coal fire. Oh, no! the turf smoke smells of heather, and brings you back on a winter's night to where the heather grows—back to sweet summer when that turf was made, and you make it all over again. You hear the song of the lark and the mellow music of the fluting thrush, you see the white cannabawn and the cowslips in the green ditches. The merry banter of the turf-makers, the click of the galloping asses' hoofs on the way home again at fall of evening. You think of Pat and Jim and Molly and Kathleen—yes, perhaps it was their very hands that made the turf that burns before you, and now they are far away over the world's seas in distant lands and your falling tear tells that you are breathing a prayer for the absent ones. A turf fire is always beautiful, even when it dies; nothing is left but white ashes, but if you move aside the ashes, you will find red, glowing embers like roses underneath the snow. You pile on the sods and it comes back to life again. A coal fire may be hotter, but it is not genial, gentle and homely like the fire of turf, around which the family and the neighbours can gather and over which great pots, full of turnips for cattle, can bubble and the kettle can sing. Surely the fairies love a home circle like this as the flames leap up and down and send lights and shadows across the faces of all present like the passing of the fairy host at midnight.

Now, let me ask a fair question : Where would our Gaelic folklore be, or would we have any of it at all, except for the turf fire ? No, for it has all been inspired at the fire-side which is the source of its inspiration. Who ever heard of a fairy story being inspired by a coal fire ? Could you think of fairies beside a gas stove ? Just try it. Or worse still, go into a room where there is no turf fire but which is heated by hot pipes. Sit before them and put your feet on them if you like and try to think about fairies, and what will happen ? About ten million of the " good people " will gather from all over Ireland and split their sides laughing at you—you'll hear them shrieking down the chimney, you'll see them in fits if you open the window-shutters, laughing at a man trying to attract the fairies into his head and his two feet on hot-water pipes. So don't try it.

And for goodness sake let no one tell me that a fairy with as much character as you'd write on your thumb-nail would go next or near a creamery with its revolving wheels and its engines, its great leathern straps and its piercing steam-whistle, its officials and its money-hunting customers. Oh, no. For the fairies love a churn with shining steel bands, and churning-day brings fairies from far and near, and they dance around to please those little ones, like us long ago, who could see them—dance to the music of the splashing dash and the hearty laughs of rosy colleens with tucked-up sleeves, who would give you, if you were good, a slice of bread and a layer of new fresh butter on it, put on with their



milky fingers? Have we ever tasted anything like it since? Sometimes, it is true, there'd be no butter, because it would be taken by the fairies, angry at your having let the plough in on a corner of their rath. But then there's a way to appease them and you'll find out that from any knowledgeable woman in the three parishes—but she must never have been inside a creamery—against which the fairies have sworn mortal vengeance. Nor must she eat bread made in shops, for fairies favour griddle-bread and help the mixing of the dough, and watch behind the sheep-dog and the cat while it is slowly baking in the embers.

Yes, dear friends, we are up against a serious solemn problem: are the fairies to go from Ireland? We answer no. Let us implore them not to go past the hills of Tipperary and Kerry and Donegal. Let them go to Cownshinawn and Crotty's cave. Ireland will then get sorry and some day will invite them back again to their old haunts throughout the land. But let it not be said that they left us even for a while without a word of lament—an appeal to stay in Ireland; so here goes:—

They are going, they are going,  
To the deep glens and the hills,  
There to listen to the croning  
Of the everlasting rills.

The fairies of our childhood's days,  
That hovered o'er our cradle,  
That poets told of in their lays,  
That smile through song and fable.

## A LAMENT FOR THE FAIRIES

11

They are driven from the fireside  
Where for ages they have dwelled,  
From the happy little homestead  
Where unseen their court they held,

Where they danced in magic circles,  
Unbeheld by mortal eyes,  
Decked with daisies white and myrtles,  
Sweet'ning hearts oppressed with sighs,

Whisp'ring joy to sleeping babies,  
Smoothing wrinkles on the old,  
Wreathing dreams of phantom ladies,  
Telling tales of crocks of gold,

Weeping with the lonely mourner,  
Sob for sob in dulcet strain,  
Telling how the wept sojourner,  
Fears no longer death or pain.

Around the rath at blush of dawn,  
They trip o'er dewy carpets green,  
Or quicker than the frightened fawn  
Glide o'er the scented meadow's sheen.

But now they go, those life-long friends  
We saw, or thought we saw, in youth;  
This heartless age the message sends:  
"Away with tales of times uncouth."

To dún and liss and castle-keep,  
The fairies vanish, sad, forlorn,  
No more they're seen at fall of eve  
In rising moon or breaking morn.

## A LAMENT FOR THE FAIRIES

But often to their hills we'll hie,  
Clonoulty's Hock or Slievenamon,  
Where fairy voices never die  
And breezes chant their endless song.

From Austral seas and prairies wide  
We'll send them greetings, leal and true,  
From those who've carried o'er the tide  
Sweet memories of long ago,

Who love to think of bygone times  
When fairy hosts went to and fro,  
And sang their songs like evening chimes  
Where streamlets gleam and daisies grow.

Long may the fairy hosts abide  
On Ireland's hills—in leafy dells,  
Long may they on their white steeds ride  
Round mystic raths—by verdant fells.

On Erin's shores the fairy bands  
Found loving refuge long ago—  
Ah! never more while run life's sands—  
From Erin, no! they must not go.

## A Dublin Exile in Old Clonakilty



**S**OPHIE BREEN was only a year old when she furnished a case of mistaken identity, which nearly had serious consequences. Her mother sold fish on the foot-path in what used to be called Great Britain Street, and nursed Sophie on one arm and held out the tempting mackerel or whiting with the other. One day a carriage drove up, and out stepped, with great care and difficulty, a stately old lady of many, many summers, who began closely examining the fish on the table at which Sophie's mother presided, for the old lady was very near-sighted and could see only with great difficulty. After fussing over the fish for a while, "How much for this?" said she, taking between her fingers Sophie's little fat arm which hung out over her mother's cloak, and which the old lady thought was a whiting.

Sophie's mother took her customer to be an old "souper" in the baby-buying business, so with a flash in her eyes she stretched out her hand for a handy junk of cod by way of reply to the query, when several neighbouring fishwomen gathered over

## 14 A DUBLIN EXILE IN CLONAKILTY

and intervened, explaining that the old lady was no such thing, but a good Catholic on her way to 'the twelve' at Adam and Eve's. A mutual understanding followed, and many's the fine fish that good old



Her mother sold fish

dame bought from Sophie's mother afterwards ; but most likely she would not have been such a constant patron had she known that, alas, too much of those earnings went for drink. The poor fish-woman made great efforts to overcome her inherited weakness, and Sophie was always washed and

combed for Sunday, and looked like a little angel in her mother's arms at the earliest Mass—for the mother's clothes were bad and threadbare. To keep her baby girl quiet in the church she used to give her a Rosary beads to play with. Their tenement room was scantily furnished, and afforded neither warmth nor light when, a few months later, the mother and her little bandy-legged toddler would come in of a night, after a day in the biting winter's blasts on the foot-path in Great Britain Street.

One night like this the poor woman sold their little all for money to drown despair, but when she awoke in the morning and saw that she had sold a picture of the Sacred Heart with her sticks of furniture her grief knew no bounds. She was too ill to rise, but she sent Sophie, who was just learning to use her creasy legs, down to the Jewman's shop to see was the picture there or was it sold. It seemed to the mother that Sophie would never be up those five flights of stairs on her way back. At length she heard the hollow echo of the tiny footsteps, and in a moment the child arrived breathless, gasping, "It's there yet, mama, it's there!" Then the poor woman sank back relieved, resolved to earn its release as soon as she got better. For three long days Sophie had to make many a run to that back street, but always came back triumphantly with the news, "It's there yet, mama, it's there, it's there."

Two years later, if you were passing by the fishmarket one cold December morning, you would have seen Sophie again. She was sitting on a bag



beside her mother's lately-purchased heap of herrings. Nearby stood an old pram with three big wheels and one little one. In this Sophie used to be rolled to the market a year before and rolled home again with the herrings included. But now she was able to run after her mother. So this morning Sophie's mother left the market when she had bought the supply of fish, and Sophie waited, keeping her gaze on the big doorway, watching for her return. The usual bustle was going on in the market, for it was drawing to closing time. The men were messing round with buckets and mops, scrubbing the floors and hosing off the tables, of fish scales and offal. Various baskets and old prams, and boxes to be carried on the head, were being hastily filled by the fish-women, but Sophie watched and waited with her big round eyes on the door-way, while a half-eaten apple lay unnoticed in her dirty little fist. All were now gone save two or three women, and Sophie fearing to be left alone in that big empty place began to cry: "I want me mama."

"Where is she, alanna?" said a woman; for they all knew Sophie since the time she was brought there first and left in a little bundle in a safe corner during the fish sales. In fact, Sophie had passed in that corner all the crises of infant ailments, which other babies passed in cosy cots; and so she was as well known to all the women as the marauding old goat without any address that lives about the market on stray cabbage leaves and whatever he can steal. Poor Sophie refused to leave the spot, for she was told by her mama to

wait there near the family herrings and pram. The men that wash out spoke among themselves for a few moments, for they had heard something. One of them then put the herrings into the old pram and shoved it gently outside the door, remarking to the women in a side-whisper behind his hand: "She won't come—penal servitude." The little girl toddled out after her mother's goods. She read in the looks of all that something awful was wrong, and when she got outside in the street she nearly burst her little heart crying "Mama! I want me mama." Poor child, she loved her mama, for she had nothing else in the wide world to love. Her father she had never known: just as well she did not; nor had she any remembrance, poor mite, of the domestic quarrel which left her hand with two fingers missing, though she wondered why her mother often kissed that hand.

A sympathetic group gathered round the child, and offered sweets and fruit; but she would not be comforted, for she hungered for a mother's love—a mother who came not. Late that day she was claimed by a slatternly aunt; and, as she was only three, she gradually forgot her mother except when she was sick, and then some vision seemed to float in her memory; gentle words seemed to speak softly to her, and when asleep on an old horse-rug in a corner she would sometimes smile in her dreams and say "Mama, mama!"

There was one thing, anyway, that the child did not lack in her new surroundings and that was liberty; she could do what she liked, go where she

## 18 A DUBLIN EXILE IN CLONAKILTY

liked, and come in when she liked. Nobody bothered about her, although the poor inhabitants of other rooms in the tenement often took her in and gave her a crust when her aunt provided no breakfast, or maybe hadn't it. One morning Sophie was out about the streets looking into shop windows, enjoying a piece of liquorice that someone gave her and with which she was plentifully smeared, when her attention was rivetted on a gorgeous motor car, from which a lady had just descended, opposite a book-shop in O'Connell Street. The door was open and the chauffeur, a fine portly specimen, was conversing with a cab-man who had pulled up for a yarn. The inside of the car looked like heaven to Sophie with its cushions and cosy rugs and flowers and, above all, the duckiest little dog in the world looking out from his wraps smilingly at the little girl. Most likely he had never before seen a little girl with only one stocking and boot. He seemed actually to say : " Won't you come in ? " And she did. She got under the rug with the little dog. Oh, such comfort she had never felt before. The poor little scrap most likely slept little the previous night, through ructions in the tenement, so she fell fast asleep. The old lady came out absorbed in the *Catholic Bulletin* ; got in, never minded the rug. Puff, puff, went the motor towards Merrion Square, and the doggie licked the sweet liquorice off Sophie's face and hands while she was dead asleep. It pulled up opposite the lady's home. She lifted the rug, and what did she see but a little street-arab girl cuddled up with

her poodle whose face was all apologies and entreaties for its new companion. The dear, motherly old lady brought Sophie into her mansion, and having learned her address sent forthwith the big fat chauffeur with the motor back to Cherb主 Street to find Sophie's home. As soon as the people in that street heard the snorting of the motor and saw the big chauffeur shining with buttons getting out, they smelt a rat, or rather, a souper. Of course they were mistaken. What else could he be, they said. Mrs. Minogue started the hue and cry by appealing to all the women in the street: "Are yews goin' to sell yer keds tew? He's buyin' 'em for wan and sex—th' ould reprobate." In a jiffy the car was surrounded by a host of youngsters in all stages of *dishabille*, who formed a circle round the car and began to jeer and jibe at its driver. The advent of several mamas in slippers, armed with decayed vegetables and fish to match, saw the big chauffeur twisting the starting wheel, and he disappeared in a shower of souvenirs he'll not quickly forget.

But the real soupers got to hear of it, and poor Sophie was bartered by her depraved aunt, taken from the dear old lady's mansion to a birds' nest, and destined for a distant land.

Was Mrs. Cordon asleep all this time? I don't think. And where was Dan Feely, the Hibernian? If you don't know Dan, then make his acquaintance at once. He's not much to look at, but what's in it of him is all there. He sometimes wears specs. that he never looks through, for he wears them down

on his nose several inches away from his eyes. He wears them for cuteness. How so? says you. Well, because when he has an important document to read at a meeting, or when a man brings him a letter, he fumbles for his specs., and by the time he has found them and taken them out of the case and settled them on his nose, he has his answer ready, or his mind made up. It's all strategy. He is full of humour and is very popular—but now I'm going to say something almost incredible. If there's any other individual—I won't say person—but individual, more popular than Dan it's his big Newfoundland dog that goes by the name of Towser. Yes, Towser Feely, as he is known in the whole neighbourhood because he's always with Dan. I don't believe the dog tax was ever paid for Towser—either because he's more like a young ass or because he goes by a human being's name. Towser who had been trained in a circus was left wandering in Dublin by a Captain from America, who fell off the gangway into the Liffey one night he was returning late to his ship from a prayer meeting or something. How Towser came into Dan's possession will never be known at this side of the grave; but if Towser had one fault it was his inclination for fish, being brought up in Newfoundland beside a fish-cleaning store. You'd often see him standing on his hind legs before the fish shop in Little Mary Street, and his nose against the window, and his eyes watering as he gazed on the fish inside. And it isn't once but twice he walked off with a basket of cod, and made a beast

of himself. He once marched off with half a bag of herrings and ransacked it at his leisure in Dan's backyard till he could scarcely move. The children in the whole neighbourhood used to ride him about and harness him to little go-carts, for he doted on children. Sure his best circus trick earlier in life was to whip a juvenile equestrienne off a galloping pony's back ; then run round the ring with her in his mouth ; then drop her down as quietly and as quickly as you or I would a lump of fat that we thought was turnip—without putting a tooth in her. Now that's Towser for you. He was only known to show temper once : it was when he was sitting, as immovable as a lion rampant in stone, outside the Hibernian Hall in Rutland Square, waiting for Dan, and an old geezer with spats on his boots coming from Kildare Street Club passed by. " Dear me," said he, giving Towser a prod of his umbrella, " how like life." Towser sat suddenly up and made a few remarks in dog language, and I go bail the ancient geezer got away as fast as his gout and corns would let him. I give these details, for Dan Feely and Towser are inseparable companions and never go without each other.

Now will anyone explain how Mrs. Cordon knew that Sophie was to be sent away by the soupers from the Kingsbridge on such and such a night by such and such a train ? And how did it come to pass that all Cherburg Street was there that night, and me brave Dan and a few more Hibs. in the middle of them ? Will we ever forget the excitement of the crowd when up comes a sidecar and two old



## 22. A DUBLIN EXILE IN CLONAKILTY

ladies with faces as long as Ash Wednesday, and Sophie crying between them? But they had the law on their side and couldn't be interfered with. Loud epithets were heard from the crowd. Dan never said a word. There was the crowd on the platform, and the police keeping them back. No one could lay a hand on Sophie to snatch her away—a little scrapeen of a thing—you could put her in your pocket. She looked helplessly around as if to say. "Save me, save me." But what could be done? Even Dan could do nothing. He only slipped something into Sophie's pocket. It was a fresh herring. He then merely whistled. There was a commotion in the crowd; people made way with a shriek. A big hairy animal as large as a calf appeared, sniffing wildly. Purposely he hadn't been fed for twenty-four hours. He smelt the porters, the police, the old ladies: in two seconds he located the fresh herring in Sophie's pocket. He nosed and pawed to get it out in vain. But he wasn't to be balked, so he gripped her by the dress, as he used to catch the girl in the circus, and rushed out with her through the astounded bobbies and the yelling crowd. Cabmen, not knowing the circumstances, made wipes at him with their whip-handles as he fled with his burden from the station. The crowd were speechless with terror at the monster and the whole transaction. "It's all right, boys," cried Dan, "that's Towser!" and their joy knew no bounds.

But before four seconds and a half, Martin Davenport, who couldn't restrain his enthusiasm any

further, cried out, "Three cheers for Towser Feely!" And up went a mighty roar. By this time, Towser was licking his lips on Dan Feely's door-mat and Sophie with her arms round his neck.

"Wisha," says Dan, as he left the station, to Jack O'Loughlin, "do you know Wheezy Knickers at all?" "I do," says Jack. "Begor, then, you wouldn't know him now." "Why so?" says Jack. "Because," says Dan, "he's gone home in the thram the way he kem into the world." It appears that Wheezy had lost some of his clothing in the scrimmage.

Dan hastened towards home, but found the town in an uproar: the sight of the huge animal bearing away the little girl brought crowds into the streets. Someone rang up the *Evening Telegram* that Towser Feely had eaten a child. The editor, who took Towser for a human being, immediately brought out a "Stop Press," with a flaring poster, headed, "Cannibalism in Jamés's Street. Man devours a child." A reporter, late of Mullingar, was dispatched from the office for latest particulars. He tore up on his bicycle, determined to find the criminal, and dismounted in High Street, staring at everybody. He turned a suspicious eye on an old lady who was licking her lips after a drop of nourishment at the corner of Thomas Street. "What are you lookin' at, you counthry dthoosh," says she. But he was undismayed. "What's an you, Mrs. McGrane?" says a sympathetic acquaintance. "Look at that cushaboo from the counthry," says she "starin' at me wud two eyes like two clocks in a

## 24 A DUBLIN EXILE IN CLONAKILTY

plate of stirabout." The special moved suddenly on his quest—not without reason. Crowds surged around the newspaper offices awaiting the harrowing details that'd make their flesh creep, and were quite disgusted when the simple tale of Towser Feely's escapade was made known.

But what'll we do with Sophie now? was the question which Mrs. Cordon and Dan & Co., had to decide. It didn't take them long. "The Hibs. aren't all in the dock yet," says Dan with venom, "in spite of Wheezy Knickers. There's a school-master, a great friend of mine, living on the outskirts of Clonakilty, as good a Hibernian as ever wore a sash. We'll send off Sophie to him in the morning." There was no time to be lost, and six o'clock next morning saw Dan and his charge in the through train for Clonakilty. And what a pretty little town Sophie had come to live in—no dirty slums, no squalor, no hungry faces. It was a new life to her. The very name of Clonakilty has a "lawghy" sound, telling of good fellowship and kindliness and decency. Of course two-pence won't talk to two-pence halfpenny there, no more than anywhere else. And why should it? Still the Clonakilties are very neighbourly when they meet each other at the sea-side. They are all smiles. But they leave the smiles at the sea-side, and say the annual good-bye to each other at the railway station, and for the rest of the year are as dark to each other as the inside of a cow. Are they worse than any other country town? Not a taste. To their credit be it said, they were all kind to the

little girl from Dublin, especially when they heard that she had been rescued from the soupers.

Sophie was invited to the various little entertainments of the town, and faix it's well for herself that she had to stay in bed with a cold on one occasion. You must know that there are as many grades of society in and around Clonakilty as in Vienna, where you couldn't show your nose at a ball unless you could prove that not one of your ancestors for fourteen generations ever did a day's work. Well, that first Christmas that Sophie was in Clonakilty there was a great frost, and the little lake near the town was frozen over. In from the country came the nobility in their furs and seal-skin coats to skate on it. Begor, so did the quality whom the nobility never noticed. Were not the commonality—the shop-keepers and their wives and daughters as good as the rest of them, for, said Pat Ryan: "we're neither intherlopers nor thransplanters." But that wasn't all Clonakilty, for there was a part of the population contemptuously called the 'Scrub,' and the Scrub had no small opinion of itself I can tell you. If they hadn't skates they could slither, couldn't they? So one night the Nobility and the Quality and the Commonality and the Scrub of Clonakilty and the neighbourhood, all crowded in on the lake. Pshath, man! ice isn't asphalt or concrete. All of a sudden you heard a crash like an earthquake in fifty china shops; while you'd be knocking a fly off your nose, Clonakilty was under water with only its head out. Such pulling and dragging and screeching and yelling

## 26 A DUBLIN EXILE IN CLONAKILTY

You'd think none of them ever learned manners or read politeness books as they trampled on one another to get out. But, be sure of one thing, the Clonakilties will never be so close to each other again till they all meet in the Kingdom of Heaven. You were at home in your warm bed that night, Sophie, in Dan Lowry's cosy home, next door to the schoolhouse, where, as everybody knows, he was the respected and loving master. The old schoolhouse is no longer there, but many an eye will twinkle if you only mention Dan Lowry's name to-day in Clonakilty.

We all have our faults. Dan was a very holy man, but, if he was, he was cantankerous as well. They say all schoolmasters are—more or less. Dan suffered from chronic asthma, and he was prepared for death so often that the priests got tired of sending him to eternity. He got a very bad attack anyway the time I'm speaking about, and he sent for the Parish Priest to prepare him for his last journey. Not a bit of the Parish Priest would come. No, nor the Curate either, nor the Priest from the next parish. What did Dan say? He said: "To spite ye all, I'll prepare meself. Gi' me the 'Key of Heaven' and a candle." And he sat up in bed, and held the lighted candle in one hand and the prayer-book in the other, and 'twould melt a stone to hear him consigning himself to eternity, and saying with sobs a last good-bye to himself. The poor wife—a nervous, sickly creature—lay on a sofa covered by a counterpane. Some neighbours came in and, impressed by the scene,

kneled down. Dan kept an eye on the door, hoping the priest would come and get a great fright at his imminent demise. He didn't come. But the next best came in the person of John Harney, a great Vincent de Paul man from Dublin, who had business with Dan. Harney was a man so full of devotion that he used to buttonhole his friends and ask them to say three *Our Fathers* once a day for a fortnight for him. So it needn't be said that he was shocked beyond measure at the scene he beheld. He joined the others in responding, but neither he nor they knew rightly whether to say "Pray for him or for her," as it wasn't clear which of them was thinking of dying—Dan or the Missus. Suddenly Mrs. Lowry almost fainted, and Mr. Harney extended a helping hand, saying: "My poor lady." That put the kybosh on everything. Dan was furious at the mistaken sympathy—that anyone else should be taken for the prospective corpse. He couldn't stand it even on the brink of the grave as he tried to believe himself. So he let one roar that was heard in the Main Street. Harney, suspecting madness, rushed from the house; everyone present grabbed at anything they could reach in their kneeling posture—stools, crockeryware, or anything handy and let fly after Harney. But he was an old athlete of Jones's Road. Well for him he was. He reached the hill behind the town minus his hat and handkerchief, which he had left on the floor, and in a dazed manner looked back at Clonakilty trying to gather his thoughts. Small blame to him. Sure Dan didn't die at all.

## 28 A DUBLIN EXILE IN CLONAKILTY

Now, I've said enough to show that Sophie was in an atmosphere of faith, hope—and charity of a sort, in Dan Lowry's house in Clonakilty, and she grew up a fine little girl with plenty of friends. It's seldom she was sick, and then the vision of a loving face floated in her memory, and faint echoes of gentle words used to come in her ears that made her feel happy. The dear old lady with the motor car in Merrion Square often asked Mrs. Cordon about her, and one day she showed the darling old lady a photo of Sophie—a fine big merry girl—and it's what the old lady said there and then: "I must have her back to live with me." So when the report went about the town, all Clonakilty was sorry. As for Pat Nolan, the young doctor—he was a fool altogether with Sophie running in his head. But Sophie forgot neither him nor her Clonakilty home, although she was living in a mansion in Merrion Square as the adopted daughter of the rich old lady. One night a strange thing happened just as Sophie was dressed for a ball in a beautiful white costume and satin shoes. Two nuns from Jervis Street came to the door and asked to see the old lady. They conversed with her privately for a long time. The old lady, very agitated, came in to Sophie, kissed her and said: "Go with them, my dear—and be brave." In ten minutes more, Sophie was at the bedside of her poor mother. Yes, those were the features of the floating vision in her memory—those the accents that remained in her ears from childhood. "It is she," cried the mother, as she beheld the hand from which the

fingers were missing—this was the baby that dangled the Rosary beads long ago—this the little tot that watched the picture of the Sacred Heart in the pawnshop—this the little neglected child, homeless, bartered, wronged—all through her fault. “Sophie, forgive me,” was all the poor woman could say between her sobs. And mother and daughter mingled their tears of affection and forgiveness in that long deferred embrace. Yes, and there was the old picture, too, at the foot of the bed, which the poor woman had sent for to her lodging when she came to consciousness after being rescued that night, half-dead, from the Liffey. That old picture which was their companion in the days of long ago. Its frame was broken and a hole was burnt through it, for it had been in many dirty rooms and noisome tenements, had been in scenes of blasphemy and vice; had been carried with sticks of furniture on many a midnight journey; the features were faded on Our Saviour’s face, but He still looked calmly and sweetly on the poor penitent woman. Our Saviour had been merciful to her in all her waywardness and forgetfulness of Him. Now He sees her safe Home at last. The nuns closed her eyes in her last sleep, and dried Sophie’s baptismal tears on her dead mother’s face, and people gathered round and whispered to each other: “How sweet and peaceful she looks.”

In Sophie’s room for ever after, that old half-broken picture could be seen just as it was that night. Fortune richly blessed her, but she knelt down before the Sacred Heart each night, and then



## 30 A DUBLIN EXILE IN CLONAKILTY

raised her eyes towards heaven, for she believed that among the countless stars that shine there, there was one bright and smiling face telling of a mother's eternal love.

Sophie does not forget her many friends who fought her battles and saved her from the vulture's nest. Dan Feely and Mrs. Cordon and herself often talk of old times together. Towser died of old age and virtue, and the Hibs got up a concert and had him stuffed. You'll see him any day in the A.O.H. rooms in Rutland Square.

Dan Lowry didn't die rightly yet—more power to him! and Sophie often sees him now, for she has gone to Clonakilty and made the doctor happy for life, to recompense him, I suppose, for giving Dan a new lease of life. They have had their share of joys and sorrows like the rest of the world; but the first Christmas after they were married it's little but she buried him. 'Tis seldom one meets doctors that believe in ghosts, or in spirits for that matter, but that Christmas Eve late at night—about twelve—the doctor went to attend an aged nun in the convent, who got suddenly bad. The doctor was hurrying along the dimly-lighted corridor when a form brushed past him—a flash of teeth in a jet-black face was all he saw. The poor doctor was worse than the nun when he got to her sick-room. His face was pale and clammy. He staggered to a chair. Several sisters gathered round him with restoratives, but he refused all aid, and only pointed in terror towards the corridor where he had seen the awful apparition. However, a good

mouthful of brandy that was sent in to make the plumpudding for some visitors, revived him. Back that corridor he would not go, but down the little side-stairs. Some nuns went down in front of him, fearing he'd fall on his head; some more after him, fearing he'd fall backwards. But do you think he'd pass the convent cemetery with its dark cypresses all around, and little white crosses over the graves? Not for the world's wealth. He went out the back way more dead than alive, and it need not be said that that was a sad Christmas for Sophie; for the doctor took to bed, and not even one bite of the plum-pudding that Sophie had made from a cookery book could he take on Christmas Day.

"'Twas that that saved him," remarked one of the commonality, whose visit Sophie had not yet returned.

It was a sad Christmas for Clonakilty, too. How the account of what the doctor saw got out will never be known, for the reverend mother only told half-a-dozen particular lady friends who were privileged to hear early Mass in the convent—one of them belonged to the Fourth Order, the other was a pioneer temperance member, the other a promoter in a confraternity, and the rest were, likewise, all most discreet people.

Now, let anyone tell me how before nine that Christmas morning the whole population of Clonakilty was surging around the convent staring at the windows, leaving their houses empty where rashers and eggs were hissing untasted on the fires,

### 32 A DUBLIN EXILE IN CLONAKILTY

and where neglected babies were screaming like pandemonium—for there was an epidemic of measles in the town at the time. Information of these strange doings reached the Mayor of Clonakilty, and he forthwith asked a visiting missionary to make an investigation on St. Stephen's Day. Clonakilty was in a feverish state of expectancy: no one even went to hunt the "wran" that St. Stephen's Day. The missionary went down to the convent, resolved to hold the investigation after Mass. Everything was spick and span in the sacristy. The grand new missal, with the Supplement of Irish saints in the end of it and all its lovely coloured markers, was there. But the wrong missal was handed to him in the sacristy by a young lay-sister from Kerry, just entered. He looked at it. "Where's the Supplement?" said he sharply. She disappeared and returned in a couple of minutes with a sheet—of newspaper, the Supplement of the *Evening Telegram*. "It came round the bread," said she, "and there are grand Christmas stories in it." He let it pass, but he concealed a hearty laugh under his fine black beard. But what occurred at breakfast nearly upset him. He always had a roasted apple before breakfast. There it was before him sure enough, smoking hot, and cream poured over it. But he couldn't put a spoon or a fork in it. Wishah, how could he? Wasn't it a young swede turnip that the poor lay sister from Kerry put her hand on in the kitchen that dark winter's morning, small blame to her. The reverend mother and the Vicaress and the Mistress of Novices

all came in to apologise. They were very sorry. The convent elections were coming on soon and the missioner was to preside. But that had nothing to do with it.

After breakfast the serious business he came on opened, and he held an investigation into the strange apparition or ghost that the doctor saw on Christmas Eve night. The missioner did this to quieten the poor Mayor and the townspeople. The doctor was in attendance, haggard, pale and unshaven. He was giving details in disjointed sentences of what he saw, when suddenly his jaw dropped, his eyes became enlarged, he fell back in his chair pointing to the open door, shouting: "There it is again going past." The nuns had like to collapse, but the reverend mother, a courageous lady, went over to the door and looked down the corridor. "Musha," says she, looking back at the doctor, "and is that the ghost you saw? Sure, that's Mother Stanislaus Kostka, the black nun from Ceylon, that's over in Ireland looking for postulants. She was going down the corridor last night for a mustard plaster for the sick sister when you saw her. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, doctor, especially being a Cork man." All the nuns present and the missioner who were till then as stiff as stained-glass windows, forgot all their dignity, and you never heard such laughing in your life. But the missioner had to go back with his report to the Mayor, who received him in his sitting-room. "Well, Father Thomas," said the Mayor, "what about that ghost story? Was—a—the—apparition real?"

### 34 A DUBLIN EXILE IN CLONAKILTY

"Real isn't the name for it, Mr. O'Kelly, the ghost pulls down the scales at sixteen stone!"

Half an hour afterwards saw Father Thomas and several clergy and the doctor and Sophie and all the nuns and the lay sister from Kerry gathered in the big reception room where the nuns keep their work-boxes on the long table. The church tower was rocking as the bells pealed the *Adeste Fideles*, and, says his Lordship, who had just dropped in, "Although it's St. Stephen's Day, it's not too late to wish you all a happy Christmas." The whole story soon got out and there never was such merri-ment before or since in Old Clonakilty.

## Floradel the Romantic



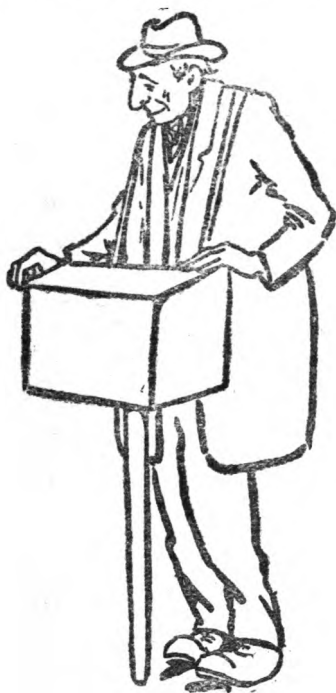
**I**F ever a young lady could be said to have Italian sunshine in her blood it was Floradel Montmorency. True, this exuberance was modified by a certain starchy reserve inherited from her father, the late distinguished rector of Moorfields. Her mother, still in the zenith of womanhood, seemed a grown-up sister of Floradel, so successfully had she baffled the ravages of time. They had travelled together through European countries, thanks to the liberality of a wealthy brother of Mrs. Montmorency, but Italy was to them a second England, and indeed a second home. They loved art, and they loved romance, and as everyone knows, Italy supplies both. Not, indeed, as if either of these cultured ladies verged on the frivolous, for they were what is called straight-laced, not to say rigid. They used to wander for hours in the Galleries of Florence gazing on the masterpieces of painting displayed on the almost conscious canvas of the old masters. The evenings they passed roaming through vine-clad glens, and conversing with the toiling country people whom

they found most interesting and communicative. To be sure, Mrs. and Miss Montmorency pitied those humble folk on account of their devotional practices which jarred on the evangelical rigour of their own views—for these good ladies belonged to the Association for the Propagation of the Gospel, which has its headquarters in Belgrade Square, London, E.C.

In the summer of 1911, Mrs. Montmorency and her daughter accepted the invitation of a relative to pass a month in her palatial mansion in Merrion Square, Dublin. The beautiful weather, which all will remember, combined with the gorgeous foliage which frames the Square, quite reconciled the visitors to the change from their favourite Italian haunts, and they averred that they found the coffee in the B.C.D. in Stephen's Green as aromatic as the same beverage in their Florentine Café, but their very English susceptibilities were ruffled at seeing a national badge on one of the attendants—for she was a trim little Hibernian, by name Nelly MacInerney. Nelly noticed the look of alarm shot by the two ladies at her very harmless decoration: they were evidently convinced that Nelly must have dynamite concealed on her person. The incident passed, and as Mrs. and Miss Montmorency were paying at the cash-counter, a venerable Italian, evidently known to Nelly, came in bare-headed with extended palm, for he had just concluded a series of performances or perpetrations, if you will, on his barrel-organ. This afforded a brilliant opportunity to the much-travelled ladies to speak Italian, and,

needless to say, Pietro was not behindhand in volubility or gesticulation.

Nelly, aware of the zeal that animated the



Pietro

ladies' breasts for benighted idolators and Roman Catholics, remarked: "These are the people you ought to convert. There's a member of their family at home sick, and maybe you could do him a good turn."



Mrs. Montmorency and Floradel became immediately interested, Floradel especially, when she heard that the patient's name was Giacomo, evidently the brother of the dark-eyed daughter of Pietro who waited on the flags outside. For Floradel was romantic and—must we confess it—her zeal was intensified when she understood that the patient was an Italian boy, dark-haired, vivacious, and poetic, even though poor.

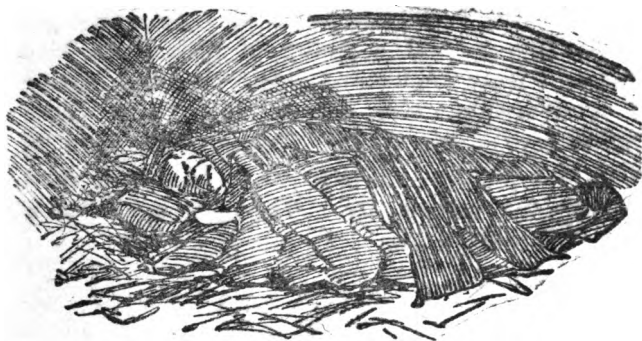
"We shall come to see Giacomo," said Mrs. Montmorency to Pietro, and Antonia, his daughter.

"Oh you so good—he very sick—his shtummack sore—he cough all de time—he eat niente—nodings. Ve verra lonely."

The evangelical ladies prepared for their visit on the morrow by supplying themselves—good souls—with little luxuries for the patient, nor did they neglect spiritual aid, for the Medical Mission in Chancery Place supplied them with sacred scrolls for the bedroom and with various tracts of an enlightening kind.

That evening found the well-intentioned and cultured ladies treading their way up George's Street, and into Chancery Lane—a relic of old Dublin, with rutty holes in the street, and bulging tenement houses on each side, as well as pretentious mansions of architectural taste, long since given over to the poorest of the population. Up the stairs of one of these Mrs. Montmorency and Floradel climbed, cautiously applying their eau-de-cologne bottles to their sensitive organ on each landing. Pietro met them on the top of the stairs with lavish

welcome so far as gestures went, and Antonia wreathed her expressive waxen features into seraphic smiles. They all entered the sick room, Mrs. Montmorency and Floradel on tip-toe. The room was dim. In a corner on the floor they saw a heap of bedclothes, stirred here and there by the patient's writhings. They heard his difficult breathing, too.



In a corner they saw a heap of bedclothes

Floradel craned her neck forward in vain to catch a glimpse of the suffering Giacomo.

"He verra sick—molto ammalato," said Pietro, with an agonised look. "He keep nodings down. He no shleep—niente."

Mrs. Montmorency saw it was high time to do something for the soul of the patient suffering uncomplainingly in that dark corner, so she spoke in sweet tones of "the bliss that awaits us when we reach our Home beyond the tide," and with tears

in her eyes she exclaimed, " Ah, dear Giacomo, at evening time it will be light for thee."

But Giacomo spoke not. Floradel gave a tilt to the lamp-shade, and a gentle ray reached the dark corner and the bundle of rags, and revealed the sad, furrowed features of Giacomo—Pietro's invalid monkey.

As Mrs. and Miss Montmorency walked scornfully through Exchange Lane to regain George's Street, they passed a group of girls from Miss Karbery's Branch of the A.O.H., who were sitting on a door-step, and among them was Nelly MacInerney of the B.C.D. Those girls were in splits and stitches of laughter. Mrs. and Miss Montmorency passed by. The girls said not a word. They couldn't.

## The Joys, Tears and Smiles of Christmas in Connemara



**T**RUE it is, the weather is not very pleasant at Christmas time. But then frost and snow are looked upon as features of the time-honoured celebration. There is an almost mysterious quietness in the country at this holy period of the year, just as there was peace long ago in the Roman Empire when our Saviour was born. At Christmas the old year is just dying; the earth is in the depth of her great winter sleep. Nothing is being done on the farm or in the fields. They are as still as death. No merry laughter, no lively banter is heard there, as in spring or summer or autumn. Even the forge is shut, except for an odd job, or an accident to the mail car. The furtive blackbird darts with a squeak across the road. He and his tribe and their relations, the thrushes, know where juicy berries are to be found, and even when snow and frost are heavy they can nestle in long grass at the base of bushes in the hedge where

their commissariat is prepared for them by the hand of good old Mother Nature.

At Christmas nothing can be done with the land. The cattle are stall-fed, except the hardy, black, curly-headed, hornless, mountainy cattle of Connemara. At Christmas time the days are very short, and the men pass the time in the barn, mending harness or twisting hay ropes for the damaged reeks, or for the purpose of tying pigs' legs going to the fair, or to make sugan chairs, which are so simple and so comfortable.

And thus the Christmas season is a season in itself with characteristics which distinguish it from other seasons. Indeed there is a charm about those short days, particularly if the sun shines brilliantly after a hard night's frost. Everything is crisp in the fields and ditches where the slanting rays of the low-down winter sun have not fallen.

We can't leave out the postman, for the Connemara postman isn't the spick-and-span minion of cold officialdom he is elsewhere, who doesn't care what news he is bringing you, and only says "It's a fine day," through habit, when, maybe, 'twould be raining. The Connemara postman has a heart in his breast. He knows the pedigree and ancestors of everyone to whom he brings the letters, and from whom he brings letters, let them be in Rotorua, or San Francisco, or Terra del Fuego. Pshath, man, didn't he go to school with the whole lot of them? Doesn't he know their handwriting? Didn't he see them off the day they went away to Galway to catch the emigrant vessel, and didn't he cry to his

heart's content every time (and that was often) a friend of his childhood left home, aye, sometimes for a foreign grave. And it's himself has a heavy heart when he sees a letter with the Boston post-mark on it, from where a letter often comes to one of the neighbours, but the handwriting is different. He fears there's bad news; and instead of going up to the house, he gives it to one of the children in the bohoreen, and walks away fast, for he doesn't like scenes of sorrow; and before he has put many stone walls between him and the cabin, the piercing wail goes up that tells of a grave far away, unmoistened by a mother's tears.

But the most news that comes at Christmas is joyful news, and the postman is beaming under his heavy load. He sympathises with all their sorrows, and why shouldn't he be happy at Christmas, especially as he gets a new suit of uniform at that festive period? Don't imagine he's going to wear the whole uniform on his long, muddy, Christmas rounds. But to save time, let me tell you that the Connemara postman is a compromise between the official and the rural existence. His peaked, red-rimmed cap, his brass-buttoned, red-braided coat completes the upper man, but, ah me, the pants are truly rural, and at the ankles are as jagged and indented as the Connemara coast. His boots are to match. And small blame to him. How many stone walls has he to cross; how many muddy bohoreens to traverse? How many gaps, filled with briars to keep out Laferty's meanderin' mule, has he to go through? And so, if you see the

postman, and a three-foot wall between you hiding his lower extremities, you see an officer of the State; but as soon as he jumps over it you see Tim Mulhearn.

Coming on Christmas, his work isn't half so hard as at other times of the year. How so, says you? Oughtn't it to be harder and heavier? Easy a bit. You know that Connemara is like this: Did you ever see an old woman's net for keeping her hair in a knob, like in the old times that were in it long ago? Well, spread the net on the table. Call every thread in it a stone wall, and call the whole net Connemara, and you have got a map of the country. Now send the postman to deliver letters in it, and you'll admit if he has his bag after him he has his work all before him. He has to go up this bohéreen half a mile, and down another as much more, and so over and hither, for the people don't live on the side of the road, but as far back as contrariness would let them. Now, at other times of the year he has to go to every house, no matter where it is. But at Christmas—mananages!—they all come to him. They are waiting for him. For although wide seas may roll between, Connemara abroad doesn't forget Connemara at home at that holy season which in the Irish memory is associated with the love of all who are dear to us. Connemara abroad, delving in mines, sweating in factories and foundries and kitchens, or away on the plains, or in primæval forests, thinks of Connemara at home in privations and labour; and a shower of post office orders, you would say like snowflakes, falls on

that rock-strewn land at Christmas time. God bless our exiles far away, who often stint themselves for the sake of the dear ones at home. And so the postman's work is light, for there is an old woman or a child at the head of every bohemeen or stile, waiting for the Christmas letter.

Of course, if there's a poor feeble creature, living by herself in a cabin, he'll go to her. She's sitting before her little fire, and saying her beads, and there's nobody with her except the Son of God, and she's so deaf she doesn't hear the postman shoving the half-door until he comes up behind her and roars out, "Paddy isn't forgetting you." She gets an awful start; the cat flies up the ladder on to the loft to watch developments, and the postman has to pull over the stool to the old woman's side and read the letter for her. And not a word goes astray, for he emphasises everything, and many an interjection of thanks to God falls from the old woman's lips as she hears all about Paddy's doings in a letter from himself. The truth is, maybe, Paddy is sick in an hospital ward in New York, and borrows the money for his Christmas letter, and never tells a word of his troubles to his poor mother. Many is the trial and trouble our poor exiles far away keep to themselves to spare the hearts of those they love at home.

When the widow gets back the letter and its enclosure, she puts it safe in her bosom, and she tells the postman where he will find a little drop of something behind the dishes on the dresser, for she's too feeble to move. "The only thing," says



the postman, "that put the heart across in me to-day was that I hadn't e'er a letter for the Widow Tobin. She was at the stile waiting for me. She partly knew by me that I hadn't, but I tried to put a good face on it. So I fumbled in the letters; morra-ya, I was looking for one. 'Maybe, it's gone astray,' says I. She said nothing, but turned her back, and put her apron to her eyes, and went up to the cabin. What matter but she has the fever in the house with her, and what did I see but the little boy of six after crawling out of the bed when he found his mother gone out, and he as white as a turnip, trying to stand against the door-post. May God help her! If 'twas a thing that Milsey was dead 'twouldn't weigh so heavy on her. What's grieving her is that she thinks he's forgetting her. Well, here's God bless us all, and may we live to see many a happy Christmas and, maybe, to meet Paddy at this side of the grave yet."

And the postman empties an egg-cup of poteen, and by the face he makes you'd think 'twas a penitential act. Then he leaves the old woman to think over all that was in the letter during the day, and faces up the stony mountain, where hearts, hungry for the love of the dear ones far away, await him. As he trudges on, it's likely he calls to mind as he passes a certain stile, what happened there in the memory of many that's living, years and years ago. Ned Og was smothered in a mine in America, but his poor mother would never believe he was dead, and for thirty years she'd come every Christmas Eve and sit at the stile, saying her beads

with her hands under her apron, waiting for the postman. The years went on and she got weaker and whiter by degrees, but still she came to the stile every Christmas Eve. It was there, Nedeen, her son, when he was a little fellow used to wait for her when she'd be coming back from Galway with the Christmas dainties and provisions long ago, and she'd have a currant cake, and it's what Nedeen would do, he'd pick all the currants out of it with his little fingers. And so in the old spot she sits waiting for the postman, for she would never believe that her boy, the finest and the strongest that ever left Kilmilkin, was dead. Sure, all the postmen that brought letters to the mountain for thirty years knew her well. But one Christmas Eve, and it snowing hard, Pateen Conroy, the postman then, came up, and says he, trying to be hearty: "Happy Christmas to you, Mrs. Joyce." But he got no answer. Her soul had gone up to God, where, no doubt, Nedeen was before her. And the beautiful white fingers of the Spirit of the Snow wove the Widow Joyce's winding sheet that Christmas Eve, long ago.

Now, talking of Christmas provisions reminds me that something else has to be done before they are bought—the house has to be cleaned and white-washed, and before the house is cleaned or white-washed the chimney has to be swept. Turf is powerful at making soot. Do they send for a sweep to Galway, the one by appointment to the Lord Lieutenant? Well, indeed, they don't. A man gets a big holly bush, because the leaves are rough

and sharp and thorny, and he ties it in the middle of a rope, and gets up on the house along the thatch, and lets one end of the rope down the chimney, and the spalpeen fanach that works about the house catches it, and they see-saw that bundle of holly-bush up and down the chimney, till it's so clean you'd think the mason had only built the house last week.

And talking of soot reminds me of an awkward stocagh of a fellow outside Oughterard who was killing the goose for Christmas. He couldn't kill her right, so he started to smather her as if 'twas stones he was breaking. She made one drive away, and flew around the kitchen, swept three cups—all they had of them—and a whole row of jugs off the dresser, and then she clambered up the chimney that hadn't been cleaned for eleven years. She got out at the top blacker than any crow; and a tinker, who was sleeping under an ass-an'-car in the bohereen, said as that object—we can't call it a goose—flew by, with a soot-choked scream: "If the divil is within the four seas of Ireland, I've seen him to-night."

The yard is tidied up, coming on the Christmas, and maybe many a hole filled up that the pigs made, rooting about during the year; and the boys very gladly help, because they can have the ass to draw sand from the seashore to stop up the holes with. The woman of the house and the girls attend to the renovation of internal affairs, and so, should the weather be fine, all the movable furniture and utensils are put outside the house, and the walls

are dusted from ceiling to floor with heather brooms and all sorts of improvised rag-mops. The poor spiders, like hairy sea-crabs, run in every direction, and then, having surveyed the situation, make straight for the rafters and the comfortable circumambient thatch.

These spiders are not like that asthmatic specimen of the tribe which the somnolent monarch, King Bruce, was contemplating that time he flung himself down in a lonely mood to think. Oh, no. A Connemara spider is an animated Marconigram, and I am seriously cogitating about a cobweb installation across the Atlantic from Killary Bay to Boston, with a view to competing with the wireless telegraphy in the transmission of cable-crammers. Now, you or I wouldn't touch one of those multi-limbed spiders, unless as an alternative to penal servitude; but the younger brother of the household is not so squeamish, and he soon has a spider as big and as woolly as a Newfoundland pup dangling from one of its legs. He threatens to throw it at his sister. She ups with the broom, and says in stern, staccato language, "If—you—dare." But before she can complete a cry of distress for aid: "Mother, call here to Jimmy," Jimmy has dared, and the fluffy windmill of a spider is careering through space in the direction of Maura's head. A scream that would startle the conscience of a bailiff, and the departure of the delinquent through the doorway were simultaneous happenings; but the flinging of the broom by Maura was only a post-mortem performance, and the wildness of her aim,

and the awkwardness of the feat, is one more proof that women must not get votes.

But see Maura scrubbing the pot-hooks and hangers that do such faithful service through the year, and always in the forefront of danger in the face of battalions of sparks and phalanxes of dancing flames. See her scalding and scrubbing stools and dressers, and isn't it herself can handle the delph, blue-patterned and gorgeous. And while she is at this, outside the house, and a pot of boiling water near, big enough for a baby hippopotamus, the man of the house is inside whitewashing the bare walls.

If a boy is to keep a pennyweight of parental respect, he should never see his father rigged out for a whitewashing bout. I must speak to the county councils on the subject, and have a bye-law introduced on it. Talk of the diver's suit—that's masherdom itself compared with a whitewasher's costume. You'd think he was got up specially to frighten crows; and what matter, but 'tisn't a hat he wears, but likely enough an old plaid shawl twisted round his head, so that he looks half-Gael, half-Arabian. And the progress of the job doesn't improve him. Up to this 'tis his uniform that's circussy, but now 'tis himself, for he has white blotches over his face, giving him a magpie complexion, and some lime has got into his eyes, and they have got so red that they resemble those of a gigantic ferret. The floor is all spots of whitewash, like shillings and sixpences and threepences, but Maura and a brush

soon remedy that, and when everything, clean and shiny, tinware and delphware, churn-bands and dippers, and the pail of water on a stand in the corner, are put back, the look of the place and the smell of the lime would do you good. But we must pass a vote of sympathy with the worms and slugs in the cabbage plot, for they don't like soot and limewash mixed with the bit they eat, nor sprinkled down their backs on a winter's day.

"Well, we're drawing to Christmas; it'll be soon on top of us, a thousand thanks be to God that we lived to see it, and it's time we were thinking of going to town for what we want." Yerrah, man, *herself* has been thinking over that for the past week. Now, don't run away with the idea that any sort of a sensible woman will put off going to Galway for her Christmas supplies to two or three days before Christmas, because if you think that, it's a sign you know nothing at all about it. Hasn't she to go in time to be able to cajole and arguefy the shopkeepers for Christmas boxes?

And here let us drop a tear of compassion for the poor shopkeepers at Christmas time. Let us put a palm-branch in their hands, for it's martyrs they are, and no mistake. Says one shopkeeper: "Imagine the bould face of Mary So-and-so to come in and ballyrag me for a Christmas box, and she never darkened my door the whole year but for a bag of yellow meal and a pound of candles! Isn't it the ould reprobate she is? She and the likes of her want to drive me to the poorhouse. It's in the body of the gaol ~~she~~ she should be with her bag o'

meal, and her pound o' candles, and her Christmas box, indeed."

This is the complaint of many a shopkeeper at Christmas time, who has not only to give Christmas presents to genuine customers, but to many whose custom is only prospective.

On this great Christmas expedition children often see the town for the first time, and put boots on, and afford a pathetic sight trying to walk in them. For a long time the Christmas visit has been uppermost in their childish minds as a reward for being good, and so the little ones are stowed away in a cart, side by side with braces of fine turkeys, whose feet are spancelled together, and whose chronic flaming pride is lowered now that they can't move. What a feast for the eyes of the children are the shops, brilliant and beautiful, in their Christmas glory! The biggest shop those babes ever saw before was the one in the village with a glass sweet-jar and crossed pipes, and clay-pipe-lids, made out of tin, in the window. But now they behold immense windows filled with provisions and toys, and sweets and cakes, and blazing gaslights, and holly and ivy, and above all, the Christmas candles, blue and blood-red, and silvered and yellow, and spotted and barred and twisted—all sorts of candles for Christmas, fat ones and thin ones, and tall and short from fourpence to tenpence, and ones as big as a wooden leg for two-and-six.

No house, be it only a poor cabin, will be without its Christmas candle on that holy night. The family may not have their dinner that day, but they

will have their candle—the emblem of Christ, Who said, “I am the Light of the World.” And to hear the girls discussing the merits of the various coloured candles in Bartley Connelly’s or Tim Neachtain’s window in Galway during Christmas week would make you stand and listen even if you were in a hurry. On Christmas Eve, too, the doors of the houses in the country are left open till all go to bed, to let in the Christmas blessing. Is it an angel goes round with it? Who knows. Then the Christmas candle is lighted, and its soft, silvery light beams on the little home, on white heads, and on curly heads, on features lined with sorrow, and on the chubby countenances of those who know not care. And the candle is left lighted, and some put lights in all the windows; and when Connemara sleeps, the Christmas candle in every home burns on till morning, and on throughout that blessed day. Black night rests on the land; but a glimmer is seen in every cottage, in the distant bog, up the mountain side, down by the ruin of the haunted lake, and where foaming torrents leap and bound. The fluffy-headed cattle wonder at the light as the sheep flocks did long ago when angelic choirs sang their anthem, and light from heaven fell upon the plains.

Fit symbol of Irish Faith in the long night of sorrow is that Christmas candle in Connemara on the holiest night of the year. The Dane came to plunder and destroy, and the Cromwellians came with fire and sword; but their persecutions only trimmed the lamps of our ancestors to enter the



heavenly wedding feast. But the Dane and the Cromwellian are gone, and the Christmas light and the light of Faith burn peacefully and brightly over the Connemara hills, as in the days of Columkille and Brendan, of Jarlath of Tuam, and Brigid of the Oak of Kildare.

There is one sight Galway visitors, especially country people, never miss, and that is the Abbey Crib, with its life-size figures, and its straw-thatched roof, and the brilliant star shining down on the Babe of Bethlehem. See the heavy-cloaked mother swaying on bended knees, and her hands uplifted before the crib. See the speechless wonder of the little ones. "Oh, *mile buidheachas le Dia*," says the mother; "but our Saviour Himself is worse off than the poor creatures back at Litturmullawn! And we to be complainin'."

The children are absorbed in awe, and admire the kings and the camels and the costumes: nothing is lost on them. The poor mother takes a glockeen of the straw the Infant reposes on, and puts a bit of it in her mouth to cure her neuralgia, and takes some to mix in the feed of a sick cow at home, and also to bring a blessing to the whole house. Full many a wonder is worked by simple faith like this. For, long after, the children have subject for talk and wonder stored up in their memory, and the very day after doesn't the little fellow who had no life in him before make himself into an engine, and draw a train after him, composed of Martin-dale blacking boxes, a sardine tin, a broken mouse-trap, and several flat stones as goods-waggon;

and to hear him puff and snort you'd think 'twas Fogarty's mule was pulling a load out of the sand-pit.

But that's when they get home, for now they are on their way, lumbering along, and many carts of neighbours before and after them on the road. Jemmy Melia's missus—Nora Veug—took care to drive her cart up so that 'twould be in the middle, because the little sup her man took overcame him, and he might pull the wrong rein if he met a motor car. The carts are all well loaded with their human freight and their Christmas store—a bag of flour, brown paper bags of raisins and currants and sugar, and, of course, white paper bags of tea, and plenty more too numerous to mention; also the Christmas candle, which the missus herself carries, and a couple of straw hats in paper, with flowers in them, which the girls carry, fearing they'd be sat on. A few little toys, such as a wooden cornrake and a Noah's ark, and a doll or two, and a big-framed picture advertisement from the grocer, depicting a round tower and a deer hound, to be hung up in the kitchen, because there's a calendar at the foot of it, and a cross for guidance after the dates when there is a pig fair in the West of Ireland.

Don't fall into the error of imagining that Christmas Day is only a day for merry-making and feasting in Connemara. It is a sacred day. For this reason it is not popular day for approaching Holy Communion. There are too many distractions and amusements at Christmas to allow of that seriousness and recollection which are associated in

the Irish mind with the most religious act of the Catholic religion. But they won't miss the early Mass—the young people, I mean. The church, a blaze of light out upon the surrounding darkness, is seen in the distance, especially if on a hill ; and in the cold, crisp air voices are heard, for up every road, and down every bohereen, are groups coming to early Mass, and all dressed in their best. You can see everybody's breath in the cold church as they pant in at the door, full of strength and health, after putting three or four miles past them across the mountain. In reverential silence they all kneel at the Sacred Mysteries, with an odd cough or a sneeze here and there, to which those near say, "*Dia linn*" (God be with us). And when Mass is over, all hasten home to a fine breakfast, and the girls take charge of the house to prepare for the dinner, and say to the children : " Here, let ye go out and play, and here's a box of sweets for ye, and don't come back till ye're sent for."

The old people and those of mature years go to late Mass, more suitable for rheumatism and asthma ; and many a " Happy Christmas " is exchanged as they meet outside the church, and stay there in groups—the men together, the women together, till the sacristy bell rings ; and all crowd in and assist at Mass with the profound proverbial reverence of an Irish-speaking congregation. A wave of devotional ejaculations arises when the Elevation bell rings out, and hands and eyes are raised to heaven as they sway to and fro, and the same happens at the elevation of the Chalice. Time and worldly

affairs are forgotten, and those faithful, fervent, humble people are absorbed in the Supernatural.

Now, it's a goose, and not a turkey, that is used for the Christmas dinner in Connemara, and a boiled goose, too, and if you put a half-pound of oatmeal into the pot along with that goose to thicken the soup, and serve it up in cups at dinner, you'll say, as Barty Delahunty said: "I wonder will we be eating geese in heaven." But don't leave out the American bacon—there's more fat in it than in Limerick hams. The blue old willow pattern dishes are taken down from the dresser for Christmas Day, and when the steam of the potatoes and the steam of the goose and the cabbage and the American bacon arises from the table, there's a fog in that kitchen so savoury and thick that they can hardly see one another, and, begorra, they don't want to, either, they are so well engaged. The old grandmother, who lives the whole year on a cup of tea and a bit of toast, must come over from her corner, and a clean, white-ironed cap, with a little frill, on her head, and a shawl on her shoulders. And they want no appetiser, for good health and hard work and mountainy air see to that.

Even the children are agreeable and happy, and have made up the row they had over the goose's windpipe for a bugle: the little sister, aged three, had to get it, for the female sex from the tenderest age have all the privileges in this land of chivalry. So on this occasion the boys adopted Van Moltke's tactics, and waited till their sister consumed a mug of goody (bread and milk)—and then when, with

bespattered, dribbling bib, she fell asleep, they appropriated the windpipe, and raised Cain in the neighbourhood.

The family may be done with the goose by this, but I'm not. We won't go into the matter as to how puddings are made with goose's blood—when the goose hasn't got over the turf reek at the first welt of the hatchet ; but we can't dismiss the subject of the goose's feathers so cavalierly. No. The big ones are made into dusters, and the little ones are stuffed into the feather bed ; and when the woman of the house is done plucking the goose, sorra much feathers are left to be singed off in the middle of the floor over the blaze of the *Connacht Tribune*, which is after doing service on the whole parish.

Now, progressive people crack up wire mattresses. Not so the present scribe. They are not in it with feather beds. The older a feather bed is the more comfortable it is getting by the addition of lovely, downy feathers every Christmas. The older a wire mattress is the worse it is getting. We've heard of a cow that ate so much she couldn't get out of the gate of Shemus Conroy's clover field. But we all know of a feather bed that had grown so big that the bailiff and the police at an eviction couldn't get it out of the house it had been in for 300 years. What did the bobbies do when they couldn't pull it nor squeeze it out the door of the cabin ? They made a frontal attack on it with their bayonets, and ripped it to lessen its bulk. Out came the feathers in the wind, and covered the black-whiskered

and red-whiskered bobbies and their uniforms. If you had only one laugh secreted in the corner of your anatomy 'twould knock it out of you to see the cut of the peelers, and they covered with feathers, and the people all with stitches in their sides laughing at them.

But to return to the family. We left them at dinner, and the door closed, and the family to itself (as it will be in the graveyard), for Christmas is a family festival in Ireland. After dinner they rest, some in the haystack, for they dine early, and some here and there, and nobody wants to talk, for all are so perfectly satisfied with how they feel, that conversation, the distraction of dissatisfied souls, is not necessary. But the girls ready up the house, and do a little titivating on their hair and dresses, and prepare for the evening's fun—a dance in the barn.

Let us steal on tiptoe, and see the old people gather round the fire at nightfall.

A hallowed spot : a Connemara hearth on Christmas night ! The young people are dancing in the barn, and the old people are gathered in a semi-circle around the kitchen fire. They are talking of the crops of the year just over, and the prices at the fairs, and the rise in pigs, and the various matches that may be made at the coming Shrove-tide. And as the night wears on, and the fire burns low, they talk of absent ones, who were with them many Christmases ago, and talk over the letters they have received from them this Christmas. And from that Connemara fireside many a thought goes out to America and to far-off New Zealand and

Australia, to where Pat or Mary or Kate is, and, if truth be told, many a thought comes back on that same night to that same place from those distant lands, and the absent ones sit in spirit around the fire, and think of the days that were. Years are telling on the poor old parents now ; their hair is whiter, their form is not so erect ; the lines of sorrow are deeper, and their appearance is somewhat changed. But unchanged remains their love ; and on Christmas night the past comes back and lives again, and they tell stories about Pat and Mary and Kate when they were children with them long ago. And the woman of the house puts on the little kettle, and it sings, and soon it splutters and something warm prepares the friends for the road home. But several merry voices at the door declare that the old people must go out to the barn and join in the fun, and give a step of a dance. And they are taken charge of, but don't want to go, morraya, and are hustled out, and a great welcome awaits them.

The place has been cleaned up for the dance, and bags of meal put away in this corner, and bags of oats in another, and the floor swept, and a few paraffin lamps here and there add to the brightness and the fragrance, and they have songs and dances and recitations ; if they have a piper he's put on a table out of the way, fearing the circling bouchals and colleens would collide against him, and knock the wind out of the pipes, and the breath out of the piper. But it's mostly a melodeon they have

at country dances now, or a concertina, and if these can't be got, many a girl can "lilt" in time and tune to the merry dancers' feet.

Nobody is short of refreshments, for the neighbours have lent teapots, both in tin and crockery, and also cups and mugs, and there are currant cakes and ginger bread and sweets. And one lump of a boy is very popular (aged fifty-seven), who tells the story of how Shawn Carty put the gauger in the bog hole. Well, this bouchal is very popular, for what happened him on Christmas Eve? Wait till I tell you.

The parish priest's jubilee happened only a month before, and among other presents he got a gorgeous tea-cosy from his niece, a nun, who teaches wool-work in the convent in Ballymore. She made a grand tea-cosy for him, with green tassels, and a design of the animals going into the ark all around it, red and yellow and golden and blue animals crawling and walking all around the cosy. And the parish priest's housekeeper had it on the sideboard in his dining-room, and who should come in to take the pledge—not a black pledge—but a three drinks-a-day one—but Thomasheen Flaherty. There were visitors in the parlour, and so Thomasheen was put into the dining-room where there was no light. Thomasheen had a few in, and when he was winding up the words of his pledge to his reverence, it's what he said was, "till death do us part," instead of "for life," for he used always take the pledge for life. And he was in a hurry to go, and his reverence was in a hurry to get rid of him; and, instead of



grabbing his hat, what did Thomasheen take by mistake but the grand cosy ; and he clapped it on his head, and if you saw him passing under the only lamp-post in the village you'd think he was escaping from a circus. But that's nothing till he entered his own house where his wife and family were gathered round the fire, and the little ones roared with delight and clapped their hands ; but the bean a' tighe was shocked. " Did I ever think," says she, " that it's a play-actor I married ? I can never show my nose in the street again."

Poor Thomasheen, arrayed in the flaming zoological cosy, stood before them, unconscious of the rage and the merriment of his family ; but he wasn't long in doubt, for the priest's house-keeper, Anne, stony-faced and rigid, shoved in the half-door, and, says she : " Aren't you afraid the ground'll swallow you, and to do such a trick on his reverence this blessed and holy night. Give that here." So she snatches the cosy and whips it off the head of poor Thomasheen, and some of his hair along with it.

The delinquent, when he saw for the first time the riot of colour he had been wearing, could only say in a moan of surprise and sorrow : " O bloody wars ! " For it's like a hangman's hat in the Elizabethan days it was.

And so when Thomasheen stood up to recite in the barn on Christmas night, a perfect storm of applause that shook the rafters greeted him, and many enquiries were made as to the whereabouts of his hat.

But the old people must dance. They believe in

their hearts they can do it better than anyone present. Now, an old man dancing a jig is a study, and an old woman dancing a jig is another. The old woman puts on a long, set, serious cast of features as if she were making her last will and testament. The old man puts on a face, not serious, but as venomous and cross as a bag o' taypots, for he has to be thinking of the steps, and that's no easy matter. On this occasion the old people let themselves out, and performed vagaries with their feet (for a little potheen is a great lubricator of the muscles). The utter seriousness of the dancers sets the whole room into fits of merriment, and the girl playing the melodeon loses her breath, and can't play; the disgust and surprise of the aged dancers at the sudden stoppage of the music, as they stand transfixed in the middle of the floor, completes the climax, and on all sides you see writhing figures. Maureen Folan voiced the common verdict when she came to, and said: "Oh, the Lord save us all, but there's not a laugh left in me!"

And the angel of Christmas smiles down upon the scene. They are happy, because their hearts— young and old—are innocent and pure and full of faith; and, though poor and struggling, and their enjoyments simple, yet that peace which this world cannot give is theirs, and God's blessing is on their Connemara Christmas.

## Adventures of a Convert Curate



IT was at a garden party, of all places, that the Rev. Silas Waldron's religious convictions received their first shock—and that, too, from a gentle hand. The ground round the Gibsons' mansion looked to advantage as the slanting rays of the autumn sun cast long shadows of stately elms across the sward and tinged the leaves with gold. Pleasant groups chatted in the gaily-decked tea-tent, or sauntered on the velvety grass, exchanging the usual pretty nothings of social life. Several damsels with mischievous eyes laid siege to the Rev. Mr. Waldron, the bashful curate, who, although a Ritualist, had puritanical tendencies. In fact he had a very serious view of his duties for one of his years, and used to take weekly counsel with a learned and godly canon who resided in the next parish. A daughter of this clergyman was among the pretty banterers who surrounded the Rev. Silas at the garden-party.

"O you cruel, cruel man," said she. "Papa tells me you are thinking of the West Australian

Mission-field. Ah, do stay in England and join our Slumming Brigade."

"Good God! did he tell you that?" cried the curate, astounded at the breach of secrecy.

Without more ado the disillusioned young clergyman gave his half-emptied cup to an attendant, threw a piece of sponge-cake on the grass and left the grounds. That evening he resigned his charge, and after a period of indecision and wrestling of spirit left for the Continent, partly to regain serenity of mind and partly to indulge his æsthetic taste by observing the ceremonial ritual of Continental cathedrals. He included Lourdes in his programme of travel. The visit to this famous shrine decided his future career. He was ushered suddenly into another spiritual atmosphere where earth seemed forgotten. The ceremonies so touching and impressive, the hymns so devotional and heartfelt, the faith so simple and strong and the confidence in Heaven's Queen so unquestioning, were a new world to him. An interior voice seemed to say: "Where your Mother is, there's your home." He obeyed the voice and was sent for his preparatory course for the priesthood to the English College in Rome. In due time he was ordained, and returning to England, was appointed assistant-priest in the East End, and was given charge of a little church in a newly-cut-off district.

But what a change for him! Ramshackle, malodorous buildings, stuffy slums and noisome lanes instead of the mansions and palatial residences and noble streets and avenues of his former cure.

Brick-kilns and boiling-down factories provided work for the toiling population who subsisted on a scanty wage. True, there was a sprinkling of government officials and their families in the more favoured quarters, and a few of the would-be gentry on the outer fringe of the district where Epping Forest begins. Father Waldron, as he was now called, soon brightened the interior of his little church and established a May procession, and with the help of willing hands constructed a rockery as an imitation Lourdes, and he kept a supply of beautiful round Lourdes medals which he used to give to old and young and to his penitents on the eve of special solemnities. He even sent one to the hardest case in his district whom he could never catch at home; this was an old ex-Fenian head-centre and was known only by the nickname "Poulaphouca," which it appears had been the pass-word of his branch of the brotherhood.

Fr. Waldron prayed one Sunday for a certain black sheep "who shall be nameless as indeed he is," and all knew the old backslider, Poulaphouca, was meant. Apart from neglecting Mass—and he had not attended for forty years before, when it seems he had a difference with the parish priest—Poulaphouca was not a bad type of man. He was economical and industrious and never drank, though he always spent his Saturday nights in Mrs. Ahearn's privileged back parlour listening to the news that was going.

Mrs. Ahearn kept the "Dog and Duck" hotel, and was the factotum in parish laywork. She and

Mrs. Davoren looked after the altars, and were presidents of parish confraternities. They also took a maternal interest in the new priest and sent him for his cough, cures of their own making, which they had brought long ago from Kerry and Mayo respectively.

The little church was indeed a poor structure and it fairly got on the nerves of Fr. Waldron, who couldn't help contrasting it with the neat edifices of the various dissenting bodies of the district. One Sunday morning his patience was unequal to the tension, and he announced to the congregation his resolve to build a new church, and also his intention to get up a bazaar, to provide a nucleus of the funds. This latter announcement sent a thrill of joy through the mamas with marriageable daughters, in which joy the latter heartily participated. The very day after, preparations began: busy fingers made tea-cosies and babies' boots, and appeals were made to friends and acquaintances far and near.

The first meeting was held: Fr. Waldron presided. Near by was Mrs. Ahearn, who wore a large brooch of her late husband, and sat stiff and independent with lips pursed up to show she wasn't going to kow-tow to consequential people, as she said. Mrs. Davoren, too, was there and showed no sign of paying court to the gentry from the fringe of the parish.

Fr. Waldron, who was evidently nervous, being quite new to bazaars, drew a list from his pocket which he proceeded to read. Before he had got

half-way through, a look of consternation had settled on all present, while the "respectables" simply mantled with rage.

The fact is, the inexperienced and impulsive young clergyman had bracketed the most contradictory people together as stall-holders and assistants. The ensemble was both uncongenial and inharmonious. Mrs. Montgomery from the "Oaks" was given as a co-worker a mere plebeian; while Mrs. Vere de Vere absolutely found herself associated with a person whose husband, as she said, owned a tug-boat on the Thames, and was captain only by courtesy.

Mrs. Davoren, who was a replica of the bouncing good-natured Mrs. Ahearn, seeing the pickle things were in—for some had risen to go—blurted out, "Musha, Father, you haven't an ounce of —." She might as well have concluded the sentence, but she only coughed and added, "the best thing you can do, Father, is to leave it in the hands of myself an' Almighty God an' Mrs. Ahearn."

"P—P—Perhaps you're right, Mrs. Davoren," replied the poor discomfited curate.

"Now," said Mrs. Davoren, in a loud voice, "let every one who has a stall choose her own assistants."

This Napoleonic coup brought peace on the troubled waters. While Fr. Waldron became deeply interested in a map of Africa which hung on the wall, various groups spontaneously formed; within ten minutes Mrs. Ahearn reported progress to him and in great good humour he shook hands with everybody as they left the hall.

When the bazaar came off, it was worthy of the name. The school-hall in which it was held was hung with Japanese lanterns and adorned with ever-greens. The stalls were veritable fairy-palaces, decked according to the taste of the stall-holders, and the latter were in perfect keeping with their stalls. Can more be said? Tittivated damsels cajoled the boys out of their cash, and it would moider you to hear the roulette man announce the colossal fortunes that awaited the lucky ones at his table. Fr. Waldron was here, there and everywhere, taking shares in all sorts of superfluous things—shawls and crazy-quilts and hobble skirts and Paddy hats, and to prevent jealousy he had to drink a cup of tea in every stall, till, as he said, "he felt comfortable almost to inconvenience."

But all things end, even bazaars, and on Saturday night Mrs. Ahearn and Mrs. Davoren looked beaming and proud. So well they might. The result was to be made known at the Masses in the morning, and Mrs. Ahearn, the president, had already a goodly purse of sovereigns for Father Waldron which she counted gleefully into his hands, and which he carefully transferred to his own pocket for safety.

"May God bless you all," said he with tears in his eyes, "and may the Blessed Virgin recompense you for your labours."

He said no more but hurried off to hear quite a group of penitents who were waiting, as the day after was the first Sunday. Flurried with success and gratitude he hastened into the dimly lighted



church, nor did he forget a supply of Lourdes medals, for to whose intercession did he owe the success of the bazaar but to the Queen of Lourdes? And he got through his work with his usual zeal,



Sitting on the sofa, his face in his hands

and the hour wore on and still more and more came in, and he was almost tempted to self-complacency when he saw a number of poorish people in their working clothes coming in — people from the borders of the next parish whom their own priest could make no hand of. Indeed, some of them by their efforts looked as if kneeling were not a frequent

exercise. But this only made Fr. Waldron love them all the more, and he breathed a prayer as he thought of the lost sheep of his own parish, poor Poulaphouca. And the priest was recompensed for his fatigues when passing from the sacristy to his humble residence to hear the blessings which a

crowd of those poor people poured on him : " Wisha, may the Lord lave you your health ; you're the best priest we ever had." " You're the flower of the flock," said one more exuberant than the rest. And he thanked them cordially and feelingly for their good wishes.

" Now," said Fr. Waldron when he gained his study, " for to-morrow's sermon ; the first free half-hour I've had this week."

He had been arranging his thoughts a few minutes when by accident his pen fell on the floor—he stooped to pick it up. Suddenly he straightened himself and put his hand to his brow. A look of dismay came over his countenance. He felt weak. He arose and staggered to the sofa on which he sank back. " Oh, Good God ! " cried he, covering his face with his hands.

This exclamation attracted the house-keeper's attention. She rushed in and saw Fr. Waldron in evident pain. She immediately flew down the street to the house of the ever resourceful Mrs. Ahearn. The shop was shut, but a light glimmered in the parlour window. Mrs. Ahearn was there, holding forth to the usual privileged customers, on the triumph of the bazaar. Hearing a loud knock, Mrs. Ahearn hastily pulled up the blind, and seeing the white face of the maid, knew that something was wrong. She left the room instantly and the two hatless women went as fast as they could to the presbytery. They found the priest still sitting on the sofa, his face in his hands. All he said was " Mrs. Ahearn, Mrs. Ahearn." This lady, who

knew what to do in all human emergencies, felt that here she was powerless. The housekeeper left to get some restorative, for the poor man had eaten little that busy day.

"Musha, what's wrong with you at all, achraney?" says Mrs. Ahearn, in a final effort of sympathy. "Is it sick you are?"

"Worse than that," said Fr. Waldron in a feeble voice. "Mrs. Ahearn," continued he, "when hearing confessions I put my hand in the wrong pocket and gave every penitent a sovereign instead of a Lourdes medal. The poor people evidently thought I was distributing aid."

"Oh, Mother of Moses," ejaculated Mrs. Ahearn, who nearly fell in a flop, "I knew there was something strange up when I saw that pack o' thrick o' the loobs and scoundrels from Stratford coming in at a late hour. They heard what was goin'. Sight or light of the money you'll never see from them, though the rest will give it back when they hear the mistake. Anyway, there's no use in crying over spilt milk," concluded Mrs. Ahearn. Everything considered, she had exercised considerable self-restraint in the presence of the priest, who was finally persuaded to retire to his room; but sleep was out of the question.

On the way home Mrs. Ahearn's wrath kindled and was at erupting point when she entered her parlour where the men were anxiously awaiting tidings. "Well," says she, in a loud voice, "this bates cock fightin'. Ah, these new-fangled converts haven't the sense of the ould stock. God be with

you, poor Father Mac, in your cowl'd grave to-night, 'tishn't you'd be after giving away hard-got gold in place of medals."

"What do you mean?" said a dozen voices.

"There's no use in putting a tooth in it," replied Mrs. Ahearn, "although I promised Fr. Waldron I'd carry the secret to me grave—there's no use putting a tooth in it; half the money I gave him to-night is gone wud them sweepin's of the lanes of Stratford that came up to confession, morra—ya."

Threats of vengeance in various shades of rhetoric greeted this announcement.

"Let ye be aisy," said Mrs. Ahearn, "let ye be aisy, he gave it away himself, and ye might as well be looking for feathers on a frog as to get a half-penny of it back. And what's more," said she, "there's no use trying to make it up. The big bugs from Epping Forest wouldn't give Fr. Waldron a red copper on account of what he said in the Gaelic rooms one night this week, for he said that the patriots who suffered for Ireland in the past, although they were mistaken, were good and noble men."

Poor Fr. Waldron never undressed that night. He paced his room and lay down alternately. Half the proceeds of the week gone; the fruit of his poor parishioners' generosity. Ah, what a sore trial the Blessed Virgin had sent him. How would he face his congregation in the morning? He would be the laughing-stock of the diocese. And he wrung his hands in torture.

Morning found him unkempt and unshaven. A

loud barking of his dog called him to his bed-room window. He saw in the garden beneath a poorly-clad man, and Fr. Waldron's anger rose when he saw another would-be penitent. He descended the stairs with a reproof on his lips.

The old man approached and hastily pushing a greasy little canvas bag into the priest's hands said: "I hear you're in trouble, Father. Here's half the savings of a life-time in memory of the dead that died for Ireland—they you said the good word about in the Gaelic rooms."

Before Fr. Waldron could recover from his amazement the man had gone down the garden walk, and was turning to close the wicket when Fr. Waldron's housekeeper came to the door. "Who is that man, Mary?" said the priest, hurriedly.

"Oh, Father," said she, "that's the ould Feenian—they call him 'Poulaphouca.'"

## The Lifting of the Mist



YOU dote of a Pa—that's a dear—you'll promise me not to eat onions at lunch. This is my afternoon at home and it's likely you'll be conversing with some of my friends, and you know the fragrance of onions is absolutely frantic and not at all form."

And Bertha Lincoln threw her arms round the paternal neck and hugged him up to the point of self-denial. The old retired merchant yielded gruffly to his daughter's entreaties and resigned himself to pay the penalty of being on the fringe of society. The dear gentleman found it incumbent on him to renounce many pet tastes of his, which he had freely indulged in the toilsome years during which he was building up a fortune, and now under the tuition of his charming daughter he has to adjust his stooping shoulders to the yoke of fashion. Poor man! One of his consolations had always been a bunch of shallots which, as everyone knows, are germicides of high magnitude, for they not only regale the consumer, but for hours afterwards permeate the air with their pungent odour for the benefit of others. Ah, but

Bertha Lincoln knew enough of the ways of society to be aware that the onion species is decidedly *vulgar*, and the very suspicion of them would fill her toney afternoon visitors with dismay. Unhappily this was not the only point in which her pa required enlightening, for he had a weakness for saying what he thought and calling a spade a spade.

"Above all things, pa, do not speak of Jamaica rum this afternoon when the visitors are present, for the Seatons—well—owe their fortune to an uncle in Liverpool who grew immensely wealthy on that commodity."

It will be seen from this that Bertha Lincoln was going it strong in order to qualify herself and her home folk for the new surroundings to which their retirement from business introduced them.

Bertha is simply charmed with their new home, and why should she not be? A palatial residence at Howth, fronted by a spacious, well-kept garden, and flanked by a trim croquet and tennis ground, would set any girl's head agog; and when in a few days the silver salver in the hall was half filled with the visiting cards of the very *naicest* in the neighbourhood, Bertha felt herself as buoyant as if she trod on air. It was with satisfaction that she noticed the cards were all from new people of a certain social distinction, and not from her former friends of convent days. For Bertha had used the sieve to some purpose since she left school, and especially since they left their residence in a mere "street" and came to live in a "road." In other

words, she had put all her acquaintances in a mental sieve, and she shook it till she sifted the chaff from the grain—and in her estimation it was mostly chaff with two or three little grains—friends whom she could not very well dispense with, or who might be useful as stepping-stones later on. And how did Bertha use the sieve? Why, a few walks up and down Grafton Street on Saturday mornings settled that. She knew it was the resort of her old school companions who came there to see and be seen or to make little purchases in the shops. So Bertha, frocked in the latest, looking chic and decided, smothered friendship and love in her breast and steeled herself for the massacre of the innocents. And what a change she brought over herself! She who used to be so buoyant and gushing, so impulsive and endearing, is now straightlaced and reserved, not to say rigid. She met her companions in Grafton Street one bright morning and gave to some a studied formal bow, as if to say "No familiarities, please—remember we're in different circles now." Others she greeted with a pert "how d'you do?" and passed on. Others who had always distinguished themselves at the exams. in severe contrast to Bertha, she flatly ignored, or glared into their faces with a cultivated, vacuous, bovine stare she had acquired from her aunt, who had copied it from ladies of society, as she said. For Bertha's aunt knew life, and resided in the new Lincoln family mansion at Howth, and gave them the benefit of her experience. In fact, it was on her initiative that Mr. Lincoln quitted



business to uplift his family socially, as the aunt put it. This worldly-wise dame opened a new world to Bertha's expanding mind and discoursed to her on what style of young man was to be regarded as eligible. She had accompanied Bertha to a few public dances and had made a complete mental inventory of the various youths with whom she had talked or danced. Some the aunt approved of, others she destined for slaughter; and Bertha proceeded to carry out the orders of this wizen-faced executioner with utter heartlessness. For social ambition stifles the noblest emotions in a woman's breast. Consequently she put the Johnnies also into her sieve and shook them and found little grain worth keeping. As, with head erect and pince-nez justly balanced on her saucy nose, she paraded Grafton Street, she sealed the fate of this and that male friend with a blank stare; with others she was more decisive, and cut them dead, as you'd lop the heads off blooming poppies by your path. To her credit be it said, there was one youth whom she felt loth to sacrifice to the Moloch of fashion, and that was Charley Nolan, well-known to the audiences of Biona Hall, where he excelled in amateur theatricals. The aunt had blue-pencilled Charley off the visiting list of the Howth mansion from the beginning, because, as the aunt said, "he belongs to the ranks of Trade," and she never missed an opportunity to contrast his awkward manners with the up-to-date "form" of a bank-clerk who took no care to disguise his regard for Bertha. Nor must it be supposed that this attach-

ment was intensified through the bank clerk knowing the financial strength of Bertha's father's account in the bank, of which he was an efficient and conscientious official.

It goes without saying that this Stanley Montmorency was a frequent visitor at "Lincoln Hall," Howth. In fact he was very useful in entertaining the guests at afternoon teas and at tennis parties; for Stanley knew the Society patter to a nicety, although it must be said that his acquaintance with books never went beyond the cover. In this he differed from most bank clerks who, as a rule, are remarkably literary. Charley was regarded as the custodian of Bertha and took her here and there, also to the pictures and sometimes to Biona Hall; for she still had, quite unknown to Stanley, a smouldering liking for Charley Nolan, and seldom missed seeing him taking the part of Robert Emmet in the costume of the day, or of Shylock, in which the make-up was perfect.

The whirl of social functions into which the Lincolns were launched left little spare time to Bertha and her aunt, the only drawback being the gaucherie of the father and mother who would much prefer to be left alone to pursue their quiet methods of existence in their own way. But the *bête noir* above all was Bertha's aged grandmother who lived with them but belonged to another order of existence, and spent most of her time preparing for the future world.

The gentry of the suburb took up the Lincolns with a rush, as they were rich and influential in

elections, and had a beautiful tennis ground. The intellectual calibre of their new social circle may be gauged from the scraps of conversation at Bertha's "at home" one afternoon quite recently.

"What a charming locality this is, with sea-view and forest, perfect—and then the floating sea-gulls. I simply adore sea-gulls. They're so ethereal and their wings so diaphanous. Which reminds me. Did you notice that duck of a blouse in Blitzler's window? It's just sweet. . . . I was behind Lady Silverdash at church on Sunday, and let no one tell me that her hair is her own. I'm positive I saw a sample of it at Madame Bonmarche's last Tuesday."

"You appal me, Mrs. Crump."

"I assure you, dear, I never took my eyes out of it the whole time, and the matter is placed beyond all doubt, for the milkman told my maid that one morning lately, when Lady Silverdash's servants were ill, she answered the door herself, and he avers he would not have known her for the same lady."

"Well, I'm positively too surprised for words."

"And so you may be, my dear; but doesn't she make up divinely? I hear the poor dear creature's matrimonial relations are not the pleasantest, and that her husband is not to blame. How unchristian people are to circulate such reports. People should mind their own business, that's what I say."

"Have you heard the great Brewonski? His touch on the piano is simply celestial. I must try

and persuade Mrs. Turnbull to allow her daughter to learn from him and give up the violin. She's so distressingly angular and works her elbow positively like a piece of whalebone. It quite gets on my nerves."

"The Turnbulls won't mind the expense; they're enormously wealthy: they made their money out of tinned meat or some horrid thing."

"You shock me, Lady Blakewell. Now that I remember it, I always did think I noticed something vulgah in her manner."

"My girl goes for piano to Signor Sporcafaccia's Academy. He looks so dreamy and in-spi-ring, and waxes his moustaches so superbly. But I may whisper in your ear, my dear, that I wish he would change his linen oftener. Now prepare, Lady Bluxom, I'm going to shock you. I had occasion to ask him when it was the Austins had their musical evening. What did Signor Sporcafaccia do? Did he consult his note-book? Not at all, my dear. He turned up his coat sleeve and there, on his immense shirt-cuff, he had *a list* of his engagements for the *past three weeks* written in pencil. Only fathom it, Lady Bluxom! *Three weeks*. From which I gathered that he had not changed that garment for three-weeks—for it was not a *detached* cuff!"

"My dear, you take my breath away."

"But you know these foreigners never tub. If I missed my morning douche even once, my nerves would be utterly unstrung, I assure you."

"But the Signor is so absent-minded, one ex-

cuses him, though he makes one fume inwardly. Absent-mindedness is incurable. One day last week Captain Scott invited my uncle George to have a glass of sherry at the Fresham. The Captain put down a sovereign. The waiter brought back eighteen shillings on the salver. What did my duck of an uncle do, the dear old absent-minded thing? You'll shriek, Lady Bluxom. He put out his hand and put the change in his pocket. Now, of course, the Captain, perfect gentleman that he is, never pretended to notice it."

Sitting on a sofa enjoying a confidential pow-wow was another group in early womanhood, and they exchanged experiences about housemaids, whose pretensions they said are unbearable; but Mrs. Blackham posed as the martyr of all present when she recounted her exploit in a different sphere. Said she: "Yes, I had to go to a horrid wedding last week—a matter of duty, you perceive—one of my husband's clients was marrying someone or other. Such a lot of riff-raff as were there. Such unbridled merriment—no restraint—no reserve, don't you know. I absolutely froze them, and when the affair was over I 'phoned to the lady correspondent of *Fashion* not to mention my name in the social column. Fancy rubbing shoulders in print with tradespeople. When I came home I was in the sulks, but my sweet old tootsy-wootsy of a hubby rewarded me with a three-guinea hat. I know how to manage him."

"Have you seen my little Pom? A perfect little cherub. He never bites or barks when he's

being washed and combed by Jenkins. Come here, Carlo, come her to mothah; O you little Turkish delight—give me a kiss."

"Did I see you, Mrs. Browne, on the esplanade at Bray as I passed by in the express to Wicklow last week?"

"Me at Bray, my dear Mrs. Marks? Why I couldn't risk my social position by being seen at Bray. No one goes there now—it's simply invaded by the masses—the oi polloi."

The social amenities of the afternoon went beautifully smooth if we except a shock or two to Bertha's nerves, for when the confectionery went round, her father who kept wisely taciturn remarked, on seeing some twisted rolls—"they go well with a glass of——" he had "rum" on his lips when a glance from Bertha struck him dumb, and he simply said "milk." "Perfectly," interjected the tactful Mrs. Jordan, whose husband, the great savant, owed a large account to the Lincolns since their business days.

But Bertha's heart was fairly in her mouth when her grandmother, a fine type of woman of enormous proportions, walked slowly in, for she was in the eighties and was very hard of hearing. Lady Fluskin immediately took charge of her and introduced her to two other society dames who sat by.

"This charming residential quarter is somewhat discounted by the strong wind from the ocean," remarked Lady Fluskin to the new arrival. The poor old lady only heard the word "wind."

"Yes," replied she, "I often get it on the chest,

but a squeeze of a lemon and a pinch of soda are great for it—great ! ”

The ladies looked confused, but in a well-bred manner broached another subject. “ We have just been speaking of an article in the *Athenaeum* about the site of Tasso’s grave.”



“ Th’other side of me is berred in Ballybough ”

“ Grave ” was all the old lady heard.

“ Yes,” said she, “ we have an allotment in the cemetery for ourselves. Me father’s people are all berred in Glasnevin, but th’other side o’ me is berred in Ballybough, and I’ll be berred there, too, if I was to get over the wall—I couldn’t rest aisy anywhere but wid me own.” The dear old lady

seeing the blank look on her interlocutors turned into a facetious vein. "It's what I do be sayin' no matter what time o' year I die the worms 'ill think it's Christmas when they see such a fine plum pudden goin' into them."

Bertha saw from the transfixed stare of the ladies that something was wrong, and left her place to come to the relief. "Yes," said the grandmother, "here's me little girl coming over. She has the hip and shoulders of her uncle Dan, but in the turn up of her nose she followed the Molowneys."

Lady Fluskin rose to go. She lived for this world of fashion and pleasure, and nothing was further from her thoughts than death, about which that old grandmother could afford to be familiar and, indeed, pleasant. And the company pump-handled their hostesses in the latest handshake, and, in flashes of electro-plated smiles, took their departure.

Was that old woman's voice but a mere sound, or did it resemble the croaking of a bird of ill-omen? It's but a step from laughter to tears, and in one short week there was sorrow in that mansion—sorrow that enters boldly without a knock into the palace of the prince and the hovel of the herd alike. Typhus made its dread presence known in "Lincoln Hall," and in a few days carried off Bertha's mother, whom she dearly loved. Before she could recover from the blow, Bertha herself was stricken down, and for several weeks her life flickered like a fitful candle-flame. But youth and good nursing brought her through, and she was able to sit in her con-



valescent chair and look out at the window—but how changed in appearance! The blushes have gone and her features are like a mask of wax. The house is oppressively quiet. No one calls, for all fear the fatal infection, and only the messengers of the tradespeople pass in by the side entrance and hurriedly leave. Ah! Bertha, Bertha, where are the birds of gaudy plumage that twittered so sweetly in your drawing-room a few weeks ago? This was what weighed on Bertha's heart like a stone. Not a single one of her new-found friends had left a card to say a word of consolation in her great bereavement—not one had called to inquire for herself. Oh, what brutal selfishness thought she—have they no human nature in their breasts?

If they had, self-preservation had stifled it. Where are now their hollow-hearted protestations of friendship, their gilt-edged compliments?

Bertha feels the need of a friend in her long, long days of convalescence. Oh, for an embrace of the girl-friends of school-days, and words of sympathy for her crushed and breaking heart. She remembers how when she was ill as a girl once before, at the point of death, they came on their way to school day after day with bunches of violets and loving messages.

As she gazed out one lovely day when all nature seemed to be bathed in sunshine, whom did she see cycling by with a merry company of friends but Charley Nolan, and the sight was a dagger in her heart, for she remembered how she had snubbed

him. True, it was at her aunt's behest and for the sake of fashion. How she loathed herself now. But it is too late. She remained at the window far into the evening hoping he would return the same way and she would make amends by a friendly nod. But no; the gay group must have gone back to the city by another road and she retired to rest—alone with her sorrow.

It must have been her good angel who inspired her to pay a visit—the first for two long years—to the school of her girlhood to see two nuns with whom she used to be a great favourite. She knew they had heard of her heartless bearing towards the old companions and that there was a rod in steep for her. But her heart ached for a friendly voice even in reproach, and she resolved to brave the ordeal; so one day found her in great trepidation touching the button at the hall-door of Becclas Street. Who should open it, in the absence of the lay-sister, but Sister Leonissa, one of her two dear friends—tall, stately, spectacled—the latter adornment being the only professorial indication in her appearance. For although this youthful sister was deeply read, yet her womanhood had passed unscathed through 'ologies and 'isms—which very seldom happens. It was the nun who opened the door, but it was the *woman's* sympathetic heart that spoke to the sorrowful heart of her old friend, Bertha. But when the first affectionate interview was over, Sister Leonissa spoke to her in serious maternal tones, for Bertha had been very cruel to some of Sister Leonissa's friends. In the nick of time in came

Bertha's other favourite, Sister Piccola, for whom the lay-sister had searched the house, and whom she eventually found dressing a huge doll for the coming bazaar. More gushing, and Bertha feels like a flower refreshed by dew. Why wouldn't she? For Sister Piccola was a strange blend of seventeen and ninety-seven. The rough world had never breathed on her, and the dawn of girlhood had simply melted into the sunrise of religious life. But from conversing with old, old nuns, and reading old, old books she had the manners and graces of ninety-seven in her voice. She delivered her advice in staccato, decisive tones, and then some fairy wand waved over her and she was back in a twinkling at sweet seventeen, and ripples of bubbling laughter made music in your ear. Suddenly, again some invisible power switched her on to ninety-seven—and more advice and seasoned counsel. And then the three friends sat together on the sofa when the door suddenly opened and in marched the superior with her usual, genial creamy smile of comfortable motherliness, and found them shedding tears enough to turn a mill-wheel. "Well, bless my soul," said she, "but ye haven't an ounce of sense. There's Polly Gilroy waiting for half an hour for her music lesson and Professor Rotterhead wants to see you, Sister Leonissa, about his new theory on the Planetary System—Who is this? Bertha, I declare (Gush number three). Why the poor girl is starving. Nothing since you left Howth this morning? Tut-tut-tut—Ring that bell."

The fact is, when Stanley Montmorency met

Bertha that afternoon he didn't know her, she looked so well. It must be said that he was the only one that still left his card at "Lincoln Hall," in spite of fever in the house. And when Bertha one day referred to this in a chat with her grandmother: "It's my opinion," said the old lady, "that he has the same love for you that a catherpillar has for a cabbage leaf. I wouldn't give his whole carcass for the little toe of the Nolan boy that was fond of you. It's kind for him to be dacint for I know his seed, breed and generation. He's none o' yer sham gintlemin wid the washer-woman after them for their bit."

All the same Bertha still allowed Stanley's attentions. He followed her everywhere like a poodle and was very useful in a hundred little ways. Bertha celebrated her coming out of mourning by a visit to the picture house in Ellis's Quay, and Stanley made the hit of his life on that eventful evening. A strike was on in the city, and various malcontents were parading the streets in a threatening manner and demanding aid for the strikers from the passers-by. The taxi in which were Stanley and Bertha glided noiselessly up to the kerbstone and, as he helped her out, a lumbering-looking labourer came suddenly forward and held out his rough palm for a subscription. Stanley glared at him like a tiger, and Bertha looked frightened and beckoned to a policeman. Before the minion of the law appeared, Stanley stood up to his full height and struck the man a crushing blow which laid him full length on the flags, and then

proudly gave his arm to Bertha as he led her up the steps of the picture-house. But the incident quite spoiled her evening, especially as the policeman after arresting the intruder came and took down Stanley's and Bertha's names and addresses, and informed them that at eleven on the following day



**A lumbering-looking labourer came suddenly forward**

they should be at the police-court to give evidence. Bertha had never been in a court in her life and shrank from the ordeal, but Stanley laughed her fears away and accompanied her to the temple of Justice in the morning. A great crowd had gathered in and around the court. When several poor ragged creatures had been fined or imprisoned, the prisoner who had figured in the affair before

the picture-house on the previous night was brought forward, looking unkempt and haggard in his soiled working clothes, his gashed cheek where Stanley had struck him giving him a blood-thirsty appearance.

"What plea do you advance, sir?" said the magistrate, "for obstructing foot-passengers and demanding money from them? What is your calling?"

The man said not a word. He stood still for a few moments. He then took off the soiled, torn coat he wore, put his hand to his face and took off his beard—he then removed a wig, and next his eye-brows, and then in a clear voice replied "My name, sir, is Charles Nolan." Bertha nearly fainted. Charley, her old friend and admirer! The prisoner went on: "It was meant only as a joke. I had been taking the part of Bill Sykes on the stage in Biona Hall last evening ——"

"Yes, yes," said the magistrate, "I often go there: they are the best actors in Dublin—Go on."

"And when my part was over I said I would go for a stroll without changing my disguise. I went towards the park and I saw an old friend whom I once knew very well—Miss Lincoln—getting out of a taxi. I don't know what prompted me to try a joke, thinking she would recognise me immediately in my disguise. But she didn't (here the prisoner's voice became husky). I forget what followed, for I became unconscious through a cruel blow—a blow for nothing." His emotion made the gaping wound

bled afresh, and he was a pitiable sight. "But it is not this I mind," said he, pointing to the gash (here his voice became a whisper, half stifled with emotion). "What crushes me is that it was *she* who called the policeman."

Bertha felt that she saw before her in the dock the man who truly loved her. "Oh! I did not know it was he," cried out Bertha in the court in great excitement. "I wouldn't do that had I known," and she burst into a flood of tears for a moment; then she turned a flash of indignation on Stanley: "You scoundrel!" she exclaimed, "who told you to strike him?"

Stanley was stung to the quick. He grasped his cane, hat and gloves, and left abruptly. As he passed out, one of the smellful crowd that haunt police-courts remarked in audible tones: "His pot is on, he's cooked." "O, begor, he's dished," replied another.

"You'd have said so yourself, though perhaps in less eloquent language, if you had been there and seen Bertha leaving the court on Charlie's arm. And if you saw them a little later with a group of old girl friends that they met in Grafton Street and all going into the Café. But nothing would prove to you that the fellow was right when he said that Stanley was dished, except you heard what the old woman who keeps a standin' on Howth said a few months later. "For," says she, "there was a terrible grand weddin' at Lincoln Hall this mornin' an' they all had their photo tuk in front of the house. An' thin they all kem up the hill an' bought

me whole basket of oranges. God bless them. An' be the way the girls was talking about oul' times you could see they all used to go to school together. For twenty year that I keep a standin' up here I never seen sich a happy gatherin' on the Hill o' Howth."



## Denny Moran's Awakening



AM an old newspaper man, and when the long winter evenings come I delight to sit before a blazing fire surrounded by a merry group of grandchildren who sit and lie about on the cosy carpet listening to my anecdotes and reminiscences. Some of these are indeed exciting, as I've lived in stirring times. Besides, the journalist in the caterpillar stage of the profession comes necessarily into contact with the seamy side of life. There's many a jotting in my old notebook on which hangs a tale, and as we are approaching Christmas I had better tell you what happened the other evening in our usual fireside gathering. "Grand-pa, a story," the children were all saying. Fortunately I unearthed some short-hand notes of mine made years ago. So, to begin at the beginning, I was then a raw youth of jovial buoyant spirits acting as junior reporter to a Dublin evening paper. It was Christmas Eve and a powdery snow was falling—sure sign it was going to last. I had been detained late at the office giving in my report for a stop-press of a fire in the city, and I was walking home towards midnight to my lodging

at Ringsend, as the last tram had gone. The street near Westland Row was torn up for repairs, and a few lamps glinted here and there as a warning to drivers. A little wooden box stood one side for the night watchman's accommodation, before which flared a fine coal fire in a large circular grate. A cruel nor'-easter was blowing eddies of snow flakes like white moths round the street lamps, and families were hurrying home with their Christmas purchases, fowl and groceries and toys. One bibulous hubby was being propelled homeward by his consort, who belaboured him on the hat with a bandbox, to the great amusement of the onlookers. But soon there was silence in the street except for a group who had gathered for shelter round the watchman's fire, near which there was a barricading covered with sacks to keep off the wind. The watchman was old and grizzled, yet his sooty features bore a stamp of refinement, and his gentle voice evidenced better days. Policeman IIIZ and a little newsboy, and a scene-shifter from the theatre, and a couple of poor homeless girls in thread-bare garments, and myself formed the group that Christmas night. But I forgot. A sailor who had missed his boat happened along, and a bottle peeped out of each pocket of his pilot coat ; he persisted in treating us all to a sample of his refreshments, and, to tell the truth, we wanted little pressing ; so we gathered in to the fire, and the old watchman became garrulous, then pensive and sad, and a tear or two glistened in his eye. Says he, " God be with the old days in Australia when I was a boy long ago. It's many a

happy Christmas I had in my wanderings." Everybody present expressed a wish to hear some of his memories and the way they spent Christmas in Australia, for we were all city-bred people, and were never out of Ireland.

"Well," said he, "I haven't any tales of wonder or dread to relate, but I'll tell ye about Christmas in a far-off country."

He was evidently a man who had received a good education in his youth, so I got in the shade of Policeman IIRZ and took out my note-book and jotted down in shorthand some of his narrative. He wasn't five minutes speaking when we discovered that he must have been either a spoilt doctor or lawyer, or maybe he had been to college intending to be a priest. But misfortune had brought him low.

He said: "It's fifty years ago since I went to Australia and I went into the bush as far as Haslem's Creek. I was engaged felling timber, and hard work it was, for the weather was scorching, and there was plenty of bad whiskey going. A mate of mine, Denny Moran, went on a great bend the first Christmas we spent there, and went away into the bush and got in with a low crowd; and Christmas Day itself came round, and they brought Denny with them to the Wesleyan Church. He didn't half know, the poor *angashore*, where he was going. But don't imagine the church was anything like Westland Row here. No, it was only a wooden structure thirty feet by fifteen—a big, long room you would say. It was constructed on piles two

or three feet high to prevent the woodwork rotting on the damp soil. Many's the bushman crawled in under the church to be cool of a roasting day, and, indeed, sheep too; but goats couldn't get in on account of their horns. And, faith, pigs would get in under it as well, and they were very plenty in that neighbourhood—big, black, half-wild pigs that fed on anything they found, dead sheep or mouldering kangaroo. They were big strong brutes with round backs like the arched culverts of a sewer, and, sign is on it, a big pig of them once ran under the axle of a bullock dray and upset it as if 'twere a wheelbarrow.

"Well, the Christmas Day I am speaking about, the weather was sweltering, and no place would suit a mob of Moroney's marauding pigs but under the little Wesleyan church where they were lying down grunting with satisfaction. You might as well be poking sacks of barley as trying to shift one of them; besides they might turn on you, and so the parson—a lantern-faced Scotchman, with a ragged whisker and a hen-pecked look—said: 'My friends, we'll let sleeping pigs lie.' So the people and parson went into the church, and poor Denny Moran with them, half-tight; and the service began. The parson preached a long sermon; 'and now,' said he in a loud voice, 'let us sing a whole-hearted hymn that will ascend to the vaults of Heaven this holy day.' And the congregation began, and nearly lifted the roof off with the first line: 'The Golden Halls of Sion.' Man dear, Moroney's pigs got such a fright under the church that the whole fifty of them jumped up and stood straight, and begob, they

lifted the church, congregation and all, off the piles, and it began to wobble like a ship at sea. Denny was sobered in a minute. Everybody screamed. The pigs made one charge and the church on their backs, and Denny made a jump out of the church and never looked back. Down with him like greased lightning to the fence where the parson's horse was tied. Up he jumped, and dug his heels into the beast and faced for Campbelltown, where the rest of us were staying at the time. He belted the unfortunate animal, for the fear of the Old Boy himself was on him, and we were coming out from Benediction when we saw Denny arriving, himself and the horse all dirt and froth. He was shouting: 'They're gone, they're gone, all gone,' said he. 'Gone where?' said everybody. 'Parson, congregation, Wesleyan church, all gone away to the dickens. I'll take the pledge for life.' And we brought poor Denny into Father Matt, and he didn't take a drop of drink for ever after."

This was the end of the quondam bushman's story that Christmas night. I remember it well, for the rest of us told a story, too, including Policeman IIIIZ. So we didn't feel morning coming, till suddenly the bells of Westland Row chapel rang out for five o'clock Mass, and we all went down together, including the two poor homeless girls who hadn't been there, maybe, for many a day before.

## With the Emigrants Leaving Ireland



AT the very period of the year when travellers from other lands are trooping to the beauty-spots of Ireland, her own sons and daughters are bidding farewell to her shores. The column of the morning papers devoted to fashionable intelligence relates daily that various honourables with their ladies and retinue have arrived from abroad at Kingstown, but the emigrant ship may bear away her freight of the young and strong unnoticed and unchronicled save by the widow's wail and the ruined fireside. The emigration season sets in now in Ireland as regularly and as surely as the fishing or the shooting season, and to accommodate the thousands, or rather the scores of thousands, who depart yearly, excursion trains are run to the seaports, and large steamers compete with each other in speed and cheapness of transit to America. Indeed, it is a sad thing to meet one of those American excursion trains, still worse to occupy a place in the train even for a short journey, for scenes of great affliction occur at every station.

But not to diverge. A bird of ill-omen recently

appeared in Galway Bay. It was an emigrant steamer—the first of the “season.” Another would call in ten days, and take up her own portion, together with those who were left behind through overcrowding on Friday morning.

About a fortnight previously a large poster, printed in red lettering, appeared on the dead walls and gate-piers of Galway, announcing the fact that the *Salmatian*, of the Allan Line, would call at Galway on the above date. Details followed concerning the superior accommodation and the lowness of the fares across. The news was carried through the hills of Connemara and out to the Isles of Arran and along the coast to Inishboffin, and in answer to the call, like to the beacon-fires of old, many a youth and maiden was up and doing. Many a one humped the last kish of seaweed up the barren hillside, or spent the last dark night watching the phosphorescent gleam on the dark waters, that tells of the herring shoal, or walked six miles, if not more, to the town and back to sell a can of milk.

And so in almost every townland in the surrounding country there are celebrated several American wakes. This is the title given to the little domestic celebration that is held in every home, however humble it may be, on the eve of the departure of one of its inmates to America. Refreshments are provided, including often some good poteen, and the neighbours get word, and music is supplied by a piper or an expert on a melodeon or a flute, or a concertina, or all in turn, and the boys and girls take the floor, and the *rinnce fada* or the

## WITH THE EMIGRANTS 107

*cor ochtair* is faithfully performed, until day breaks, and weeping takes the place of laughter, and the whole house turns out to accompany the parting one to the station, except the old grandfather, or grandmother—who rocks the cradle with her foot and minds the house and keeps the cat from improving the shining hour by eating the thrush. The little local band very often drowns dull care by enlivening strains, although the music may be sometimes a bit disjointed through the members being in different vehicles.

Great numbers of emigrants go by train to the Cove of Cork. The departure under notice just now was by steamer from Galway. The emigrants were all from remote places in Connemara and from the Isles of Arran. From an early hour in the morning, cars began to arrive by the magnificent Connemara road leading to the "Citie of the Tribes," and soon the streets evidenced unusual signs of briskness as groups hurried hither and thither making little purchases, in the matter of apparel, as they are done now with their fine, comfortable cloaks and shawls, and will be expected by the laws of custom to wear hats and jackets, while the boys have changed the báinín or flannel jersey for the usual attire. Incidentally it may be remarked that the báinín men of the west and south-west are among the hardest, most industrious and most virtuous men of Ireland, while the women, for their spirit of piety and high ideals, are the closest earthly imitators of their Model, whose name is ever on their lips—the Mother of God.



## WITH THE EMIGRANTS

In their wanderings up and down the streets, aged parents with difficulty keep pace with their boys or girls, who stride along with the strength and elasticity of youthful prime, their blood elated by the prospect of a bright future, when they will have, as they hope, a comfortable home across the ocean to which they can in time bring their dear parents to spend their declining years in peace and plenty.

The *Salmatian* was anchored out in the roads near the lighthouse, and a snake-like trail of black smoke told that the firemen were sweating at their work, and the fluttering flag of the Stars and Stripes proclaimed the steamer's destination.

The wharf from which the steam-launch will take the passengers is crowded. The parents of many of the emigrants could not come so far as Galway, so the good-byes of these are already said, but brothers and sisters, cousins and neighbours galore, surround the travellers. They are all talking Irish. You often hear "Tabhair dhom do lámh" (give me your hand), "Padraig mo bhuachaill," or "Una mo chailin." The bantering remark of an admirer to a colleen close near elicited the rejoinder from her, "Caithfe me cloch leat" (I'll throw a stone at you), which threat lost all its terror through the merry twinkle in the eyes of the fair terrorist. Through the whole crowd it was a case of "Erin, the tear and the smile in thine eye." All eyes were red more or less from recent weeping, yet there was an air of rejoicing and pleasantry through the whole crowd.

The fact is, every single one to whom I spoke had a greater number of immediate relatives of the family circle in America than in Ireland. They were going to brothers and sisters who had sent for them. Besides, they have all a well-founded hope to be back soon again to visit their parents or to take them out. They are well aware that they will be able to help them better by going to America. In fact, every mailboat that arrives in Ireland from America brings thousands of pounds to needy homes to pay the rent, to clothe the children better, and to relieve the poor parents in their hard conditions of life. In the majority of instances those who leave Ireland for foreign lands leave it through no choice of their own, but to save the little home for the family. Emigration means self-sacrifice, heroism of the noblest kind, love of kith and kin and filial affection; and although it robs Ireland of its best it enriches other lands with good men and women to build up the nation, and be the glory of the Church.

When the steam-launch sounded its whistle to go, many sad scenes were witnessed as the affectionate adieus were repeated, but in many more instances it was not "good-bye," but "God be with you till we meet again."

As the launch neared the emigrant ship, we saw that every available spot was occupied by groups of scrutinising passengers anxious to see what kind of people were to be their companions on the journey.

Many of the girls were very nervous climbing the

swaying gangway, especially as their hands were engaged in holding all manner of portable luggage. We were greeted on board the *Salmatian* by a coffin-like smell of new wood, a large amount of which had been cut into planks to make bunks and tables. This was rather intensified by a further smell of disinfectants, which were being copiously used all over the vessel. It seems her last cargo was cattle, and so the authorities very kindly saw to it that no lingering fragrance of new milk should render the passengers home-sick. I looked over the vessel, and every place seemed perfectly clean commodious, and even comfortable. The vessel had already called at Moville, in Donegal, since she left Glasgow, so that there were some hundreds on board before Galway was reached.

Ninety-five per cent. of all the passengers were not more than twenty years of age. The passengers, taken *in globo*, were a faithful miniature of the great Republic whither they were destined. They were drawn from several European nations—Germans, Slavs, Poles and Russians. Notices what not to do were up in several languages in various parts of the boat. Among the number there were some undoubtedly who had a past, some who had been failures, and who rather late in life were taking a plunge for weal or woe. Some family groups, who evidently had seen better days, kept to themselves, and seemed rather downcast at being on an emigrant ship. Then the acrobat and circus world seemed to be represented, and whole German bands and troupes of rope-dancers. The anarchist, too, often

turns his steps towards the setting sun, having miscalculated the length of a fuse in trying to elevate some potentate to a position higher than a pedestal. And so there he is standing Napoleon-like alone, with folded arms, gazing with piercing glances at the new-comers as if they were intruding on his private demesne. You can't mistake him. Wire eye-brows, volcanic orbs, ragged whiskers, sunken features, caped overcoat, slouched hat. We shall hear of him again, perhaps, for Herr Shtarkstingen-fein's photo is in the hands of the Chicago police already. But Signor Bombasto Furioso paces the deck, whence all but he had fled. Who could fail to recognise a lion-tamer, who enters the cage and confronts the monarch of the forest single-handed, whilst timid people are requested to leave. Which reminds me. Some years ago a blood-curdling scene used to be enacted nightly in a menagerie in New York. It was a conflict between a lion and a tiger. The tiger eventually died, and the cute manager persuaded the keeper—an Ennis man—to put on the tiger's skin and go through the performance. He looked a fine tiger, and he did his work all right, but he didn't half like it, and in the middle of the performance was starting to back towards the door of the cage, after getting a rather vigorous paw in the ear, when the lion spoke—"Don't be unaisy, sure I'm a County Clare man myself!"

On an emigrant ship you have all sorts of human freaks. Who can mistake the Great Human-Ribbon who can twist himself to the top of a house

through the rungs of a ladder, but who is now, alas ! too seasick to get up even a lather to shave. And underneath a frayed black dress-coat we meet our friend, Professor Viskieonticcavich from Warsaw, who is being ordered away by a distinguished specialist, on account of chronic dryness of the larynx, induced by vocal strain. The much-duelled student from Heidelberg, with a face terraced with sword-cuts, often moves westward, too, to pursue the study of the three-star theory of astronomy, very often associated with the milky way. He pays little or no attention to the indignant remarks of the professor who has failed to get a publisher in Europe for his *Blatheritzen ohne Worte Opus II. allegro*, and hies him to the land of the brave and the free where there are no trammels on genius.

What a new world for the boys and girls of Ireland. Such people as these were like a fringe on the large gathering of workers who were buoyant with hope as they laughed and chatted here and there about the ship, and soon the emigrants from Galway were parading the deck—the girls linked in threes and fours after having taken possession of their quarters, while the boys had a smoke—the last, very likely, which the most of them would care about for a few days. Several groups of Catholics gathered round to get a blessing, and the poor boys pulled out their slender purses to make up a collection, which, of course, was declined. One often sees very old women leaving Ireland for America. I interrogated one, and, said she : “ Ah, your reverence, all my little girls are gone to America

long ago. The youngest sent for me. I wouldn't go to lave me ould bones in a foreign counthry, but I'm be meself in the cabin, and I do be afraid of a night that if I was to die there'd be no one to run for the priest for me."

We addressed a few words of advice to young and old, and the bell on board rang to notify visitors to leave. It was the emigration bell. Is it tolling for a nation's funeral? The church bells toll for the old—this bell for the youthful and strong. As with many a *beannacht De libh* (God's blessing with you), we descended to the steam-launch, which had to delay there half an hour, the boys and colleens of Donegal and Connemara crowded to the ship's rails. Their thoughts were far away with their dear ones at the solemn moment of departure. Each was thinking already: "I want to see the old home again." The spirit of the past is upon them; they are at the cross-roads once more, and a young fellow sings a weird, pathetic song in Irish. A lively girl of eighteen or twenty brightens up and puts life into the company by her merry strains in Irish, like *Cailín deas cruidhte na mbo*. But in the middle of it, some tender sentiment overpowered her, and tears fell thick and fast.

The gangway is drawn up. Good-byes are waved and spoken. A sweeping hail-storm from the north-east bursts upon the harbour. The passengers rush helter-skelter to the saloons, for many of them have not a change of clothing, and can't afford to get wet. No one is now visible on the steamer save the captain and the grizzly old Galway pilot.

God grant that this storm is no forecast of their future in a strange land.

The beauty of the scenery is certainly out of harmony with the event just recorded—a gorgeous frame for a sombre picture. The graceful undulating hills of Clare rise in the west, to the northward is the great gap through which the billows, fierce and white-crested, roll in, and here in caves along the rock-bound coast they creep to hide after deeds of wreckage on the Atlantic wastes. There is Oranmore to the south, where the memory of Father Roderic Quinn—uncle of Roderic of Australia—is held in benediction. A dark castle, from which music and song once wafted o'er the waters, looks sullenly down from its eminence, its windows like the eyeless sockets of a giant. Here is Ballyvaughan, the port of Lisdoonvarna, six miles away, and close by at the eastward is Salthill, on the esplanade of which visitors are walking and gaily chatting. These beauties will charm strangers' eyes, but the poor emigrants must forsake home and country for a crust. The steamer passes near the homes of many of them in Connemara and Arran; there are loving eyes watching the disappearing boat from many a dizzy height, and in front of many a cabin a ragged group is gathered, who keep their lonely watch so long as the steamer's lights are visible, because there is on board one whom they love, and who is thinking of them now more than ever.

A silvery moon has risen in the sky, but does not brighten the gloom over the west that night. One

may apply the words of the song, with a slight change :—

Out from many a mud-wall cabin  
Eyes were watching through that night,  
Many a manly chest was throbbing  
For the blessed warning light.  
Murmurs passed along the valley,  
Like the banshee's lonely croon,  
And a thousand eyes were weeping  
At the rising of the moon.

They passed near enough to the shore to hear the lark's evening song. May that last sweet sound of Erin be a harbinger of hope to them. May that song long re-echo in the halls of memory to console them when home-sick or sad in their prairie hut or dwelling in a smoky city, or when in dreams they revisit the paths of happy childhood amid the Fair Hills of Holy Ireland.



## The Famous Cook Street Elopement



THE perusal of old documents, newspaper files and musty records often repays the trouble. We sometimes notice that incidents which awakened great interest and intense excitement when they happened are completely forgotten by succeeding generations. The following quaint episode pieced together from various reliable MSS. is an instance, and brings us back to the dim and distant past of the historic city of Dublin. Those interested in further details are referred to the Keeper of the Municipal MSS., City Hall, who, if it is in his power, will with his usual urbanity place his literary treasures at the disposal of inquirers on the first of April next.

The strange happenings to which the attention of the readers of this volume is invited relate to a certain individual named Edward Brogan, known familiarly as Ned. We cannot do better than let the scribe of the old document in which they are recorded speak for himself:—

Ned Brogan was under great obligations to Nature

## THE COOK STREET ELOPEMENT    III

for his superior sense of smell ; for, be it remembered that he brought nothing from his seven years' service in the militia except bibulous habits and two semi-blind eyes—the effect of a gun accident. Ned's slender pension kept the wolf of hunger from the door and enabled him to pass many a convivial evening with a cousin of his on the mother's side, who had a public-house on the Rathfarnham Road, out beyond Harold's Cross. Were it not for the olfactory power of his nasal organ, it's many a time Ned could not have made his way to Little Strand Street in the heart of the city, where he was the sole occupant of a ramshackle house and lived on the top landing. For when Ned had coiled himself round the contents of several pints, his eyes became neither useful nor ornamental. He could not see a stim. The sight temporarily but peremptorily forsook his squinting orbs. Imagine, then, his predicament one dark November night when he left his relative's cosy fireside three miles out of town with not even a glimmer in his lack-lustre blinkers—for the city gas supply, quite recently introduced, had failed through an accident to the gasometer, and the street-lamps gave no light. Ned beat about for a while like a storm-tossed mariner and wandered on and on, up lanes and side-streets. But fortune favours the brave, and sometimes, indeed, the drunken ; and Ned's now only capable organ of perception, namely his nose, ran into a bank of fragrance from a sausage factory on the outer precincts of the city. The wayfarer hailed this otherwise nauseous reminder as the mariner hails

## 112 THE COOK STREET ELOPEMENT

a lighthouse. He had wits enough to take his bearings, and floundered on till his vigilant proboscis signalled the unmistakable and unique aroma of boiling horse which reigned over the Coombe. He



Ned

groped on through almost palpable darkness, feeling his way by walls and house fronts until he picked up a soulful whiff of hops from the brewery just established in James's Street. His heart was now relieved of anxiety, and he felt so exhilarated that he mumbled a few lines of "Home, Sweet Home." With uncertain gait he ploughed onward through the dense obscurity, for his eyes were still utterly useless, and soon the saline, savoury, spicy fragrances of Anna Liffey greeted him—for the tide was out at King's Bridge, and Ned knew that he was near home at last. He reached Little Strand Street safe in wind and limb, but here his two poor legs went on strike to-

gether and would carry him no further, and he sank down on his own door-step.

"Wisha, bad luck from ye," he said, addressing his rebellious props when further effort was fruit-

less. He laid his head on the stony pillow and fell fast asleep.

How long did he sleep? Ask the solitary star that sent a sickly ray through a chink of inky sky. But the fact remains that he was awakened in a short time by a heavy pressure on the chest, and a loud, hoarse breathing in his ear and the pricking of bristly hairs on his face. Ned's heart thumped a hundred to the half minute; a cold sweat coated his brow; Guinness had died within him, and now he could see once more. He thought for a moment that he was confronted by an uncanny phantom or—a return of the jigs. But no, the incubus was a horrible reality.

With trembling fingers he rummaged with his only free hand for a match; he scratched, and in that fitful flash he saw an unearthly sight, a pair of living, fiery eyes; a face half devil but whole beast; he saw the awful visage of a huge tiger looking down fiendishly into his very soul, breathing whirrs of indrawn snorts. The brute's capacious paw covered poor Ned's breast. His lips became as marble; his tongue like an iron rod; his whole frame rigid.

That the ferocious animal was neither an escapee from the Zoo which had just been opened, or from a travelling menagerie, will be gathered from the files of the daily papers of that eventful morning; for at first streak of dawn the newsboys were running wild over the city with bundles of papers on which the ink was scarcely dry, crying out at the tops of

## 114 THE COOK STREET ELOPEMENT

their voices: "Stop press! Escape of a gigantic tiger in the city of Dublin. Man-eater at large. Last seen crouching on the prostrate body of a man in Little Strand Street. His fate unknown. Whereabouts of the Monster a Mystery!!!"

It goes without saying that war-news, politics, English murders, divorces, corporation squabbles were all forgotten in that wave of frantic fear that swept over the city. The effect was electric, instantaneous. Such was the call for the papers that the newsboys sold them only to their customary patrons, and behaved quite snobbishly to others. The passengers from the incoming Bianconi buses and coaches and canal fly-boats had scarcely alighted when they boarded the next out-going vehicles and boats back to their suburban homes to defend their nearest and dearest from the prowling beast that even then might be crouching behind a shrub in their garden, or paralysing the wife of their heart or the nursery-maid with his mesmeric and fatal stare.

We gather from the MSS. that the only city men who did not return to their suburban villas that morning were Mr. — and Mr. —, for whom their respective mothers-in-law kept house in the absence of their wives and family on a country visit. Neither did three other prominent townsmen whose wives were leaders of Advanced Thought. But to the credit of all those gentlemen be it said that they scanned later "Stop Presses" with feverish solicitude. Scenes of wild disorder took place at Harcourt Street and Westland Row—the

new railway stations—where the platforms were thronged by excited people awaiting the next outgoing train. The daily papers of the time emphasise the fact that business was at a stand-still in the city. The churches were almost empty, for even pious ladies would not venture out. It was pathetic to see rheumatic dames of many, many summers clambering up on the top of buses for greater safety. No children were allowed to school, and every window displayed half a dozen startled childish faces flattened against the glass, and every big dog roused wild cries of "There he is—there's the tiger." A thrill of horror arose along the tenements by the Liffey when a spotted, barred object was seen in the distance. Fifty thousand eyes were glued on the monster, which turned out to be—only a stewardess from the Glasgow packet wearing a Calcutta shawl that she got from her brother in the horse-marines. But the presence of the tiger somewhere in the city or suburbs was productive of some good in the midst of the general dread, for tomato-nosed old geezers came home early from their club, and ragged boozers came home early from their pub. As Mr. Fierney, the great temperance man, said: "That tiger did more for the cause of teetotalism than the holy fathers at the last mission." That was a strong saying, but 'twas a true one.

But let us turn to the newspaper report of that day:—

#### "SENSATION IN THE CITY

"The public are warned that a monster tiger—

## 116 THE COOK STREET ELOPEMENT

till quite lately a denizen of the Indian jungle—is at large in this city. Its whereabouts could not be ascertained up to the moment of our going to press. Whether the beast is skulking in some outhouse or city garden or whether it has taken to the suburbs is a mystery. It consequently behoves the citizens to adopt measures of extreme caution lest they or members of their family be taken unawares by this hereditary enemy of man. Children should be kept indoors, and the partially infirm should not venture out.

“The animal is the property of Colonel Fairfax, of Island Bridge, who has just returned from Madras, bringing with him this strange pet. The Colonel asserts that the tiger has lost much of its native wildness as well as several of its teeth, and its claws are sheathed in leather gloves. He offers a reward of fifty pounds to the person who sees the tiger first and reports the matter at his residence.”

When the general consternation had abated a little, some adventurous spirits were emboldened to look out for the tiger by the offer of the fifty pounds reward, especially as the beast was semi-toothless and its claws protected. Indeed, quite a number of needy knights from all grades of society determined on little excursions on their own account to try to catch a glimpse of the coveted prize. Among these was a bank clerk whom his washer-woman threatened with exposure except he settled his two years' bill. A medical student in arrears to his landlady also took the field, but the main credit is due to the Boy Scouts under their brave leader, Captain Seevers.

Many will recall his jaunty hat which suggested the refrain "I fear no foe in shining armour." Their first proposal was to search the Zoo, but it was over-ruled that the loose tiger would keep away from cages. The proposer insisted that the raw-meat-wild-beasty smell would attract the tiger. "If it's that he wants," says the captain, "it's to the Coombe he'd go, where there's 'atin' an' drinkin' in the air. So," he continues, "we'll try Stephen's Green, where there are big shrubs and bushes."

So he ordered the bugler to sound a reveille on his cornet, and off the scouts headed for Stephen's Green. 'Twas so dark you could only see their bare legs—tempting, toothsome tit-bits for any tiger. One of them climbed a pole erected by the lately formed Telegraph Company at the Leeson Street side of the Green; another got up a tree at the Harcourt Street entrance, the brave captain himself crawled in the grass on his stomach, taking observations to the intense amazement of the various water-fowl living in the Green, and the still greater amazement of some sea-gulls that kept circling over the gallant officer.

Although the public were still in a state of panic and clamoured for the capture of the animal, yet the spirit of enterprise conquered fear in some courageous breasts. Father Ryan recommended his church committee to look out for the tiger and the £50. A member was selected. He went to Howth for a week. "If you don't go home it's rats you'll be seeing," says the proprietor of the hostelry to him (see the vote of thanks in the



Minute Book to this daring individual). But what won't feminine competition do? The great Bovada bazaar was going to be held at this time, and the president, Miss Mac, of the Bachelors' Fate Stall, called together her assistants, some of whom were out of the giddy girlhood period, and, says she: "If we don't do something our stall will be the lowest down in the list of receipts. The wet weather ruined our whist party, and a dance is useless, as the men always eat up the profits in the big supper they want for their money. Now, what do ye think of going to look for the tiger—there's a reward of £50 for seeing him first, and we'll turn all the other stall-holders green if we get it, especially as the tiger has leather gloves on his paws and has only a few teeth?"

The day after saw ten of the assistants on the Terenure road on the top of a bus surveying the horizon. Yes, and they got down, too. They must have looked unprepossessingly tough, for the conductor—a rude fellow—remarked to his mate: "They needn't fear; divil a tiger in the world would tackle them."

They dodged cautiously around Mrs. Minogue's orchard. "What are ye lookin' for?" says she.

"For the tiger," said they all together.

"Fither for ye be lookin' for a husband," says she. "Let ye get off now. Me husband is a pinsioner and if ye don't clear out he'll take ye."

"Musha," says Jo. Burke, the youngest of them, "when he took you he'd take anything."

They then left in a hurry. But there were plenty

more on the lookout for the tiger and the £50 as well. A resolution was carried in the local branch of the G. L. to try and capture the prize for literary purposes, and a courageous member was selected: "Cá go maít," says he, and he took the train for Lucan and surveyed the country for miles around from the hotel windows, but saw nothing. The S. F.'s, too, weren't behind in enterprise, and resolved that the tiger when found should be shot, as he was an importation from a British settlement, and, above all, was military property.

In a word, many citizens who were in financial straits took a day off and were to be seen on various vantage spots in the suburbs, peering cautiously about them. Indeed, many castles had been built in the air on that prospective fifty pounds by persons in all grades of society.

Among them there was one—Barney Geoghegan by name—who almost claims a passing tear: his motive was simply and solely love. The object of his affections was a girl out of Yacob's, and that's saying that she was well-behaved, decent and respectable. But Barney's wages as a baker were too meagre to support a wife as well as his mother and two small sisters, and this "hope deferred" made Barney's heart grow sick. He had risked many a shilling in lotteries and "sweeps," but luck did not come his way. It can easily be surmised that the fifty pounds reward for locating the lost tiger simply set Barney's brain on fire. He talked of nothing else to Maisie Cosgrave—his girl's name—during the whole of their Sunday walk in the

Phoenix, and indeed Maisie was just as interested as himself. Barney earned his Sunday relaxation after his week's search for the tiger, for a bakers' strike was on. Maisie remembered having seen a picture in her school-book of a tiger sitting by a stream catching unwary fish. The day after saw Barney on a canal-boat passing Inchicore, in close conversation with the man at the helm.

"Any fish in the canal?" says Barney.

"Do you think fish have no sense?" says the man; "what would they eat?"

"Don't ye throw away the lavings after meals?" says Barney.

"There don't be any lavings," says the man, "and fish don't chaw bones."

Barney got off at the next lock and went round by Cabra and Stonybattery, peering inquisitively in every direction. That same night his confidence in human nature was rudely shaken, for he was watching at the rere of a respectable butcher's house, thinking that the tiger might be prowling round the smell of meat. About twelve o'clock Barney heard the butcher's men hello-ing in the distance and dogs barking furiously—the usual thing when a beast was being brought in for slaughter. The men were crying out: "Head her off there, Jimmy"; "Ketch her, Nettle, that's the boy."

But Barney saw no animal, save a dead cow on a cart, and the rumpus was being made to gull the neighbours, to make it appear that a fine, frisky, live bullock was being brought in and not an old

cow that had died a natural death. Barney went home a sadder and a wiser man, but not before he got the shock of the night. He saw a variegated object led by a man. "Thank God, the tiger at



Barney waiting for the Tiger

last," cried Barney. But it was only a greyhound in a coursing rug.

In these diurnal and nocturnal wanderings Barney met other bold adventurers like himself. But he scowled on them angrily. He regarded

them as intruders attempting to take the bread out of his mouth, or rather as barriers between him and his heart's fond ambition. He almost threatened to murder one of them.

But we must return to Little Strand Street and the impending tragedy. Did the tiger eat Ned Brogan? I hear someone say, "Poor Ned," on whose trembling body the monster had his paw and into whose face he shot his fiery breath. No. Let the reader heave a sigh of relief. Be it remembered that Ned had imbibed a skinful of Guinness that night, and even a tiger sniffs in disgust at flat Guinness. So the tiger would not taste Ned on any account. Besides, Ned resented an undue dig of the tiger's paw by some rare oaths which he had learned in the militia, and the tiger immediately regarded him as a military friend, having points of resemblance with his gallant owner, Colonel Fairfax.

Ned rose cautiously, but the tiger rose, too. Ned entered his house—the tiger walked after him. Ned ascended the stairs and awoke echoes in the various rooms—for Ned was the sole tenant and lived at the top—the tiger slowly but surely followed him. On the first landing, Ned met his cat with tail half-mast and hair bristling on end at the strange visitor. Ned, fearing hostilities, grabbed the aggressive pussy by the back of the neck and ascended the next flight. Ned looked behind and saw a glare of expectancy in the tiger's eyes, and he was wagging his tail. "Begob," says Ned, "if he wants to ate the cat he can have her, and welcome." He opened the door of his room and let the tiger in

first. He then threw the cat after him. The latter began to tear around the room like a blizzard, did several rushes up the walls; flew, miaowing diabolically, across the ceiling once, and on the second attempt fell into the maw of the tiger—and there was a dead silence.

Ned knew nothing of the fifty pounds, but he had often before kept someone's lost collie for a week till a reward would be offered, and he determined to observe the same tactics with what he guessed was a tame tiger brought up as a pet in some family, for there was a brass collar around his neck and "Colonel Fairfax" engraved on it. The feeding of the tiger was an easy matter, for Ned's empty house was the rendezvous of all the cats in the neighbourhood. No doubt strange noises were heard from the house at feeding time in the dead of night, for the cats did not die without a struggle. Yes, strange sounds can be elicited from catgut when Herr Shtinkenfein or Signor Sporafaccia play the violin and delight the audience with rhapsodies in G major or Nocturnes in F or Lullabies in B flat. But, ye gods! what are those sounds from *dead* catgut to the notes a cat can obtain from her own live innards when she is being absorbed by a tiger into his gurgling depths.

No wonder the decent neighbours in Little Strand Street heard quare goings-on. No wonder the women at the fish market all complained of the loss of their cats. It was a common topic in Bolton Street, Great Britain Street and Little Mary Street, and as it was not clear what became of the cats,

## 124 THE COOK STREET ELOPEMENT

the sale of sausages suddenly stopped in that locality. Talk went round about a haunted house, and the police took Ned's house under observation. One night the noises were particularly bad—the



Ned and the Tiger

tiger was assimilating a pet Persian pussy with a bell round his neck that Ned snapped up in Mountjoy Square, and the tiger had to get him up three times before he could get him down right. But the yells of the one and the other brought both India

and Persia very near Little Strand Street that night. A little barefoot newsboy that was running by at the time shouted out in fun: "Holy Smoke, it must be the tiger." This remark was as a match to powder, for the pent-up fear of the city burst forth as the report fled from street to street. Crowds began to arrive in twos and threes and then in scores and hundreds. The military were called out. The swaying multitude stared up open-mouthed at Ned Brogan's house. Every man and woman in the crowd wanted to see the tiger first and report to Colonel Fairfax and get the fifty pounds. Loud voices were heard on every side—a sea of faces looked up.

A speechless stillness suddenly fell on the crowd—for out of the top window of Ned Brogan's six-storey house they beheld the tiger's head protruding, and looking down on them calmly, deliberately, fiendishly. The awe of the jungle was on them. There was the huge head clear-cut against the blue evening sky, and the tiger's bristly whiskers stood out like wire. That furious, furrowed physiognomy with its calm strength awed the fear-stricken crowd. Then a wild stampede from the spot under the window ensued. Women rushed here and there, looking for their children or dragging little ones by the hand, and all howling together.

The excitement was tremendous and the yelling deafening, for there were countless altercations as to who saw the tiger first, and bloody-nosed rival claimants appealed to every policeman along the



## 126 THE COOK STREET ELOPEMENT

street. Then came a lull in the storm when Peter Doran, who had broken his pledge, came out of Greek lane coatless and closely followed by his distracted wife. He did the act of a madman. What else would you expect from a man that challenged the Blessington tram to fight him? Peter looked up with bloodshot eyes at the colossal feline and cried out, as he squared in fighting attitude: "Come down and thry it, you blagarde." A seizure of trepidation convulsed the multitude, "shut him up!" "strangle him!" "choke him!" cried a thousand voices, fearing the tiger would come down, and Peter's wife threw her big, ragged, brine-soaked shawl over Peter's head, held him fast, and, looking up to the scowling beast, cried out pleadingly: "Don't mind him, Sur, he's dhrunk."

The proud animal, when he had silently stared the crowd into abject terror, withdrew.

There was, however, one man who didn't lose his head, that was Sam Smith, who kept the pub. called the "hel-trap," because it had openings into two streets, not mentioning the back door for after-hours' visitors. As soon as he found out that Ned had possession of the precious tiger, he sent up, unsolicited, three gallons of "invalid" stout to Ned's landing. In half an hour matters developed accordingly, for again the tiger put out his head, but looking unkempt and idiotic; one ear flapped limply and his whole appearance betokened that the wand of Guinness had waved over him. But what made the people's blood run cold was the sight of Ned in a high state of joviality with his arm round

the tiger's neck, singing : " For he's a jolly good fellow—that, nobody can deny." Old women went down on their knees in the gutter and prayed for Ned's soul ; others shut their eyes and put their fingers in their ears not to hear the crunching of his bones—to be expected any moment. The howl of dismay that arose must have frightened both man and beast for they disappeared from the window and soon heavy thuds of falling bodies were heard on the stairs of Ned's house. The crowd suddenly vacated a wide space before the door, but not a moment too soon, for out on the roadway rolled the bodies of Ned and the monster of the forest. Both were well-nigh helpless. Pigeons, groggy through malted grain, were nothing to a groggy tiger who drank his fill of porter after three days without moisture of any kind. No sooner did the claimants see the tiger in their power than they approached and some grabbed him by the ear, or the tail, or the feet as if to dismember him. The police only thought of Ned, and soon the ambulance tore up, the red-shirted driver roaring and beating his gong furiously.

" Chuck the two of them in," said he. And willing hands lifted in Ned and the tiger, and the horses pawed the air and away with them down towards Jervis Street. Who the dickens happened to be passing but Barney Geoghegan, in whose brain Maisie Cosgrave, his girl, and the tiger and the fifty pounds were hopelessly jumbled. The ambulance struck the lamp-post ; out fell Ned Brogan. The tiger's tail drooped out. Barney saw all in a

flash. With one spring he was up beside the driver. With one belt in the jaw Barney landed him off the box on to the roadway and seized the reins, turned the galloping horses up the quays towards Island Bridge. Men with half-emptied pints rushed to the doors of the pubs. as the horses and ambulance flew by, knocking fire out of the cobble-stones, and the awful howling of the tiger inside was frantic, for the door was shut on his tail. And as the ensemble passed King's Bridge the station-master and the porters ran out thinking a locomotive had run amuck. Up Barney drove the prancing steeds to Colonel Fairfax's palatial residence with marble lions outside and a sentry pacing up and down. The colonel, wearing a Turkish fez and carpet slippers, rushed out, followed by his white-haired lady and family.

"I have your tiger, sir," roared Barney.

The old man wept with joy, and so did his missus and the whole family; and to see the pet tiger on his hind legs with his forepaws on the old man's shoulders would do you good, although the tiger's nose and lips were all encrusted with cat-fur.

"What about the reward, sir?" says Barney.

"O, dear me, yes to be sure," said the Colonel, "come in"; and they went in, tiger and all. And the colonel counted out the fifty pounds into Barney's hands. Barney, beside himself with new-found joy, encountered as he left the house quite a stream of sundry seedy specimens of humanity as well as the bank clerk, the medical student, and a fat fisherwoman with scales on her arms, all out of

breath, each thinking that he or she was the first who had seen the tiger and claiming the reward. The kindly old colonel, however, took them all in and asked the medical student to dispense hospitality. The latter gave a glass to every newcomer, and to keep them in countenance he replenished his own glass every time, for he said it was the opinion of his profession that nothing was so conducive to flatulency as soda-water, neat.

Barney and the ambulance were gone in a jiffy to the humble home of his lady-love. I leave it to you to imagine how every door and window in Cook Street held bunches of inquisitive heads as the vehicle rolled up the street to Maisie's parents' home. In with Barney. Whatever he said will never be known to man or mortal ; but in a moment he re-appeared, half carrying, half bundling Maisie into the ambulance.

Her parents shut the door and refused to open it to the countless knocks of all the neighbours in the street. This thickened the mystery. Some said "it's only an over-feed of sheep's throtters is wrong wid her." Another said "It's a wipe o' the tongs the oul man gev her for back talk."

The police, hearing of the occurrence, rang up all the hospitals. But no corpse or maimed case was reported there. A garbled report associated the disappearance of Maisie Cosgrave from Cook Street with the tiger, and a certain parish clerk in the suburbs said the tiger should be opened to see if there were high heels and hairpins in his inside ;

## 130 THE COOK STREET ELOPEMENT

for he had known Maisie, and he said she was "the thrimmest little bit o' muslin ever went into last Mass of a Sunday and her boots creakin'."

Late that night the horses and ambulance were discovered driverless at Jervis Street hospital gate.

The disappearance of a girl from her Cook Street home was the general topic of the morrow. The stolid silence of her parents added fuel to the flame of suspicion. The authorities took the matter in hand. Police with grappling irons dragged the Liffey; but it yielded no solution of the secret.

On the third day four neat little boxes tied with ribbon, with an English post-mark, arrived in Dublin: one at the head-quarters of the Ambulance Service; a second at the residence of Colonel Fairfax; a third to Ned Brogan; the fourth to Cook Street. These boxes contained wedding-cake from Mr. and Mrs. Barney Geoghegan, and subjoined, in a feminine hand, were the words: "Maisie Cosgrave, late of Cook Street." The city heaved a sigh of relief and resumed its wonted serenity.

Those interested in this excerpt of bygone history may call for further details at the late Mr. and Mrs. Barney Geoghegan's home in Liverpool. It is now occupied by their worthy descendants. You will see devout and also patriotic pictures on the walls there. But over the mantel-piece you will see the photo of a genial, gigantic tiger, smiling blandly and giving no reason whatever to conjecture that he in the slightest degree regretted the part he played in what has long since passed into history as "The Famous Cook Street Elopement."

## An Interrupted Benediction



It is just a year ago since a scene of barbaric splendour and pathos mingled, took place in a clearing before a forest at a Catholic Mission in the wilds of Arizona. An Indian tribe was fare-welling their beloved priest. It is difficult to say whether his or their grief was the greater, for he was almost one of themselves, since he first came among them in boyhood as a camp follower of a fur trader. City life in Buenos Aires, whither he was brought by his evicted parents, had palled on him, accustomed as he was to the free life of the hills of his native Kerry, and he yielded freely to the attractions of the nomad Indian life, until a gash from a wounded jaguar laid him low in the care of the Spanish Friars in a mission settlement. And here he had turned to God and to the missionary life, and after a short interval came back from college to sacrifice his life to the salvation of the Red Man. But the call of duty now assigns him a distant field of labours, and down from craggy heights and from deep forests come his spiritual children to say good-bye. Young and old were there, and babies tied on their mothers'

backs. The mules and horses were tethered to the forest trees, and plumed and armed warriors and hunters sat in a semi-circle round his reverence, whose eyes were moist with tears. The women-folk stood behind, arrayed in brilliant shawls, their black hair streaming in glossy cascades on their shoulders. One after another the ancients spoke and recalled the story of the priest's life, and his many sacrifices for them, and dangers risked from wild beast and roaring torrent. And when the priest arose to speak, the silence of death was on the throng; and when he concluded, he and they were in tears, and the bronzed chests of the warriors heaved with sobs, and they all sang the mourning song they sing when they bury their dead beneath the palm tree or in the cedar shade.

Before he left the spot, however, the priest asked a favour which brought anguish to the features of the ancients. He asked to see their Tesoro, the secret cave wherein are the tombs of their earliest ancestors, and their ancient writings engraved on rocks, and their precious heirlooms from the hoary past—the cave wherein no mortal foot save theirs might tread.

For a long, long time the ancients discussed apart, and at length the spokesman said: "We grieve exceedingly that only on one condition may we grant your wish, that you consent to be brought blindfolded to the cave, and blindfolded back therefrom."

The Padre agreed. He knew that of all living men he alone could get the privilege, and he poured

forth his warm thanks in their own mellifluous tongue. They started on the morrow. Picked warriors formed the band, and for many a league they rode till they came to a glen where grew giant trees and interwoven thickets, and here they put on bandages on the Padre's eyes—a snakeskin bound triple round his head. And many a league further they went on foot, leading the Padre's mule, and hewing their path through the matted jungle. At length they stopped before a rock, half hidden in foliage, and one of the band went forward, and with a key, handed him by a white-haired senior, opened an iron door. He did not enter, but burned sulphur in a shell, and the blue fumes rose up within the cave, for the warder thereof was a mighty cobra, coiled round the rafters over the door inside. By degrees he moved his colossal folds and unwound himself backwards, and soon in a dark recess in the distance were seen his angry eyes gleaming like rubies.

The cavalcade now entered. The bandages were unloosed from off the Padre's eyes. Pine torches were lit and shed fitful rays on the Indians' Secret Cave, the Sacred Tesoro of his ancestors. Hideous faces in stone, sculptured when the world was young, met the gaze of the Padre; skins of beasts long extinct draped the walls; skeletons of reptiles, unknown to modern man, were here and there in crawling and springing attitude. But what enchaind the attention of the Padre was the graven writing on the tablets of stone, in characters unknown to science. Many a stony scroll was here



undeciphered and undecipherable even to the Redskins, who regarded the hieroglyphs with reverential awe. The Padre gazed around in stupefaction, and stored his memory with all he saw, but above all the secret writing sharpened his latent Kerry zest for knowledge, and he was standing absorbed before the unsolved problems when the white-haired senior gave the signal to go.

The cave was locked again, the bandages readjusted on the Padre's eyes, and the same tortuous road traversed for leagues and leagues.

But the Padre's mind was active, though his eyes were veiled in darkness. "That cryptic writing is a link with the past of the Indian nation—is the solution of their migrations, the account of their mysterious origin. Shall not science unveil the mystery? Cannot I come back to solve the secret?" says the Padre to himself. Yes, but how find the way through this glen of forest and thicket for leagues and leagues?

Trust the Kerry brain for a plan. Being a Franciscan Friar, and like the Spanish Fathers there, he wore his habit and beads, and the beads were strung on a leathern thong, and not on wire. He broke the thong on the return journey, and now and then let a bead drop unnoticed by the warriors, and though two and eighty beads formed his rosary of the Seven Joys, only a solitary three were left in his hand when that long, long journey was coming to a close.

But his heart was full of joy, and with reason, too, for some day soon, he will alone retrace his

steps to the cave by the path on which he has secretly dropped the beads. What a revelation for science he has secured! and a contribution to the world of intellect. "Bravo, Kerry!" you're both clever and cute, a match for the Redman as well as for the white man. And now, more power to you, Cahirciveen; you're nothing if not plamasach and kind-hearted; for the Padre, full of interior joy at his triumph, gathered the band around him when his eyes were unbandaged, and in an overflowing heart gave them his blessing with outstretched hands as they knelt on the grass. "*Benedictio Dei Omnipotentis Patris et Filii et . . .*" At this moment a breathless Indian, the tracker of the tribe, came up—"Pardon, holy Padre, you've been losing something the whole way"; and there in the Indian's hands were all the beads, even to the very last. The Padre did not complete the benediction.

The Tesoro was saved, but Cahirciveen was beaten.

## Biddy Early's Prescription



**T**HERE is not finer scenery in the whole of Ireland than between Oughterard and Clifden. The placid waters of the Corrib stretch away towards Galway, and following the indentations of the land, mirror in their clear bosom, now tapering pines, now wooded peaks or rock-bound shores.

The torrent-scarred Twelve Pins outline their rugged forms against the sky, and stand like guardians on the frontiers of the mystic West. Frothy torrents glance in the sunlight, as they murmur their way down steep declivities to get lost in pellucid lakes in the glens and valleys beneath. These lakes abound with fish, and anglers from England and Scotland come yearly in great numbers to enjoy their favourite sport in these invigorating and indeed glorious surroundings. Cyclists, too, may be met with, coasting down the smooth winding mountain roads of Connemara, the finest roads in Ireland.

It is about a cyclist I am going to tell, and what happened a few years ago, when his punctured cycle left him to the mercy of Shank's mare one

stormy summer's night ; for the weather changes suddenly on the Atlantic sea-board, which seems to share in a way the vicissitudes of the ever changing sea.

A sweltering day wound up with thunder and lightning and blinding showers, and our cycling friend, a London Gael who loved to be alone in his summer rambles, was shoving along his disabled machine and looked dripping and disconsolate, for indeed he was both.

He made for the first dwelling he saw after a four miles push, and welcomed the light in a little window as a star of hope. But it was not a Connemara family who lived there, nor was it a bean a' tighe who answered his knock with a Céad míle fáilte on her lips, but a dapper little gentleman in plaid suit and leggings, who seemed half afraid as he peeped out from the scarcely opened door, for he had heard tales of moon-lighters and poteen-makers and poachers, and was a bit nervous, and small blame to him. But one glance at the stranger reassured him ; for the plight of the latter was no counterfeit, but spoke genuine need and disaster. So he threw wide the door, and let him in.

A blazing turf and bog-deal fire shot brilliant tongues of flame up the spacious chimney, and lit up the whole kitchen, and shed a ruddy glow on the faces of the occupants all appalled in fishing suits, for they were a fishing party who had rented the house for a season.

Long experience on the tented field in the martial service of England had taught them how to cook

and house-keep, and the camaraderie of camp life made them friendly and social.

They made the new-comer welcome, and forced him with the sweet authority of hospitality to change his clothing and stay for the night on an improvised shake-down. The roar of the storm without, and the pattering of the rain against the windows, left the visitor no alternative. Indeed, further progress on his journey would have been an impossibility that night, for a pall of darkness had fallen on hill and dale, and blue-white flashes of lightning and cannon-ading peals of thunder echoing along mountain sides added a solemn grandeur to the night. And when the hour grew late, and the fire had dwindled into feeble flickering embers, for the convivial party were about to retire, someone began to talk about ghosts and the supernatural; and said he to the visitor, who to his own friends was known as Shemus: "You Irish people are very superstitious, and believe in all sorts of hobgoblins and fairies."

"Well!" said Shemus, whose dander was up, though he suppressed it, "I admit that we are a bit inclined that way. It's traditional in our Celtic race. But after all, is not that same an indication that we are of a poetic nature, and not victims of gross materialism? Our superstitions are harmless, and are often beautiful conceptions, weird and fantastic though they be. I have lived," said he, "in London, and I can tell you there is more real superstition at a fashionable spiritualistic seance in a West End drawing-room than there is in a Connemara cabin; for," said he, "these so-called cul-

tured people who go in for superstition forthwith make a religious cult of it, and discard their own form of belief. Not so the Connemara man. He retains his religion as firmly as ever, and indeed sometimes colours his pishroques with it. How often have I thrown a tooth over my left shoulder three times in honour of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in order that a finer tooth might grow in its place ? ”

The company all laughed heartily at Shemus's illustration, and confessed they had not before heard this distinction between English and Irish superstition. Having thus cleared the ground, Shemus felt at liberty to indulge in a lighter vein, and talked of the dreamy woods that covered Ireland once upon a time, of the mysterious Druidical rites performed in forest glades, of our ancient history as the people of destiny, and of our Eastern origin, and how it is the bent of our Celtic natures oft to dwell in thought on the borderland between here and hereafter.

“ This love of the undefined,” he continued, “ this craving for symbolism, will take centuries to eradicate from the Irish breast. But is it desirable that it should be eradicated ? ”

The company became more interested as Shemus gave rein to his volubility—for he was a B.A.—and they made no attempt to conceal their wish to draw him out on an evidently favourite theme. And Shemus told them about the wonderful power of herbs, and about lucky days and magpies, and red-haired women, and the virtue of the cuckoo's spit

to cure a cold, and how the sign of the cross with a half-penny was said to cure the King's evil, if the coin is carried in the possession of one of that monarch's somewhat numerous descendants.

"It is strange, too," said Shemus, "to what lengths people will go in order to get cures for themselves or their cattle. But they're not half as bad as those who consult faith-healers and clairvoyants in London," continued Shemus, with a roguish sidelong glance at the Cockney of the party.

At this juncture Shemus burst out into a merry laugh, evidently at some reminiscence recalled by the train of thought and his reference to cures for cattle. All present declared they would not go to bed till he told them about what interiorly tickled him.

"Well," said Shemus, anxious to be agreeable after the kind treatment he had received, "it's wonderful what queer things a hard-headed man will do if he allows superstition and pishrogues to get the better of him. So put a few sods on the fire and light your pipes, and I'll tell you a little story of what happened over at Tubberadora when I was a little boy." Here Shemus took a sod from the fire and crunched the burning end into the bowl of his pipe in true Gaelic fashion, and when it was reddened, told the company, between *shaughs* as fullstops, about "Biddy Early's Prescription." "I'll tell it you in the language I heard it from my poor father in," said he, "may the Heavens be his bed to-night," and Shemus crossed himself. "It's

## BIDDY EARLY'S PRESCRIPTION 141

about a man that consulted a witch for a cure for a sick horse.

"Evelyn O'Neill was the pick of the parish, and many a bouchal's heart would flutter when she'd pass into the last Mass of a Sunday, and walk through the penny place in the Church, straight up to the respectable place, and her boots creaking



Biddy Early

Her father was very fond of money, and he swore that the man who would get Evelyn would want to have more cows than Evelyn had fingers and toes. One chap from America, with a blue Yankee hat on one side of his head, came after her once, and says he to her father: 'I worship the ground she stands on.'

" 'Do you tell me that,' said old O'Neill! ' Well



now, whisper, I'll sell you that bit o' ground she stands on for fifty pounds, if you pay me down.'

" 'Sir,' replied the Yank, 'you have no romance in your nature.'

" 'Girr out, you amadhawn,' said old O'Neill ; and he went away.

" It was well known in the parish that Evelyn and Peter O'Connor, the great wrestler, were 'talking'; but Peter had no prospects, and it came as a shock to the whole countryside when it went out one day that old O'Neill was giving Evelyn to a middle-aged widower named Raftery, who fell in for a big farm by the death of an uncle. It was talked of everywhere, and Raftery and old O'Neill were called all the sorrachawns and somachawns that ever lived, by the boys of all ages from twenty to fifty-five, for whom it was the one topic of conversation wherever they met after their day's work.

" It preyed especially on the mind of Larry MacInerney, a labouring man, who had often nursed Evelyn and she a baby ; and now to say that she was to be tied to an old money-grubber against her will, without love or affection, didn't leave Larry a night's rest since he heard it. And so one night, and it late, Larry MacInerney and Pat O'Gorman were going home after spending a few hours with the boys at the forge, where the smith was detained mending a broken spring of the mail-car. Says Larry to Pat—'Whisper, isn't it dreadful for Evelyn O'Neill to be going to be married to that yellow-lugged sorrachawn of a Raftery. If I were her mother I'd sooner lift her on me back and drown

her in a bog-hole than I'd let the likes of him have her.'

" 'Whisht man, talk aisy,' said Pat; 'Rafferty is a night-walking scamp, and if he heard you he'd put the law on you. Besides, when her father was making the match, he didn't ask you or me our advice, and so why need we mind? If she consents to marry him, that's her business.'

" 'And who told you,' said Larry, 'that it's of her free will that she's going to do it? It's another story I have heard only yesterday from Nellie Fitzpatrick. Nellie and herself are like two sisters, and Nellie says that it's breaking Evelyn's heart if her father makes her marry Rafferty. 'Tis Peter O'Connor she wants. It's nothing to me; but, Patsy, I mind the time my poor mother had the fever and when me own wouldn't darken the door for fear, Evelyn O'Neill brought many a jug of whey to the bedside, and prayed with us all for my poor mother's soul the night that God sent for her. I'm only a dacent boy, Patsy, breaking stones for me livin'; but the MacInerneys don't forget a good turn, and my blood boils to see that girl growing old every day at the thought of being harnessed for ever to that hollow-hearted smeasachaun. I'll tell you something that has been running in my head since morning, and it is if we could play some trick that would break up the match with Rafferty and give a chance to Peter O'Connor.'

" 'And what's the plan you've hit on?' said Patsy.

" 'It's one that it won't be so easy to carry out,'

said Larry. 'Come down to-morrow night and we'll put our heads together, but don't say a word to anyone that there's anything of the likes going on.'

"And so for many a night after that Larry and Patsy would meet, and by the way they were whispering you'd think it was another Fenian rising they were planning. Things went on as usual in the parish, and Christmas was over, and the talk was beginning about the great wedding that would be on the head of Evelyn's and Raftery's marriage.

"Larry met Raftery, the prospective bridegroom, by the way of no harm on Sunday coming from Mass, and Raftery in a grand new suit, and they had a talk down the road together, and spoke about the prospects of the year, and how the potatoes were blackening in the pits, and about the great rise in pigs. 'And,' says Larry, who knew that Raftery's crack mare was sick, 'I was nearly losing the best sow in the parish. She got the staggers one day and began to walk as crooked as a Christian coming home from a wake. I dosed her, but all to no good; 'twas worse she was getting, so I said to myself I'd go over and see Biddy Early.' As everybody knows Biddy was a witch and a fortune-teller, and had second sight, and it was said she had communications with the Big Man himself, in the form of a black calf. Anybody that would be in trouble would go to Biddy, although he had to go to the Bishop the Sunday after, for penance.

"'So,' says Larry to Raftery, 'I went to see

Biddy, and she asked me had the sow an appetite for her meals, and did she ever eat her own bonnives. She didn't, says I, for there isn't a kinder sow in the parish to her bonneens than that same one.' 'Well,' says Biddy, 'here's an herb that I gathered on the mountain last week in the waning moon,' says she, 'mix it in her trough,' says she, 'and walk her three times past the Cromwellian hanging-tree on the Abbey Road at twelve o'clock at night,' says she, 'and be sure to light a half-penny dip,' says she. 'That's all. Well, I did that, and in two days the sow was as lively as a race horse,' says Larry.

" 'You don't mane it,' said Raftery, who was brought up by his grandmother, and so his head was full of pishrogues.

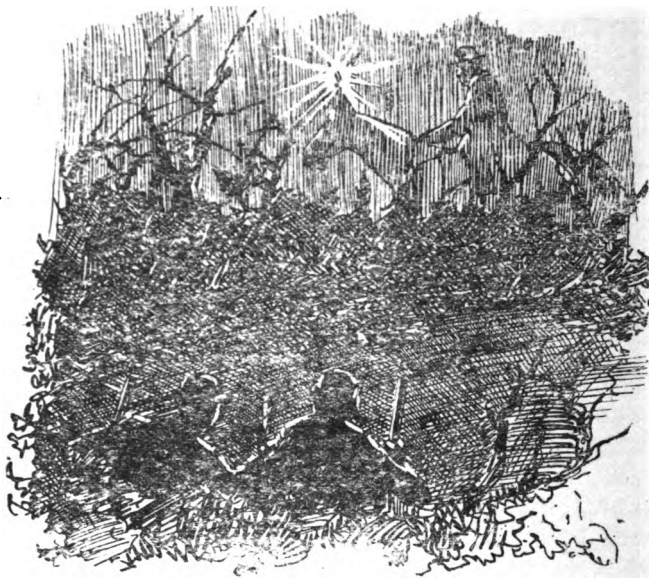
" 'I do,' said Larry, 'an' I'd say it on the Book.'

" Raftery said nothing, but went home ruminating along the road. His mare was off her food for some time, and he was afraid the foal would be lost, so he made up his mind that he'd go and see Biddy, as he had spent a handful of money on the 'vet.' from Ennis, and all to no purpose. He was fully determined to carry out her prescription.

" The night after, Larry called in by the way of no harm to old O'Neill, Evelyn's father, for the loan of a gun, 'for,' says he, 'the tinkers are stealing the handful of potatoes I have in a pit up near the old rath. They're camped in the bohereen and such a gathering of women an' children an' asses an' dogs isn't in the Barony to-day.'

" 'O the Lord save us,' says old O'Neill; 'throth

then I'll not only lend you a gun, but I'll go along with you myself with another gun. We can't put the fear of God in them, but I'll guarantee we'll put the fear of the man below'—for old O'Neill was thinking of his own potato pit.



**"A man on horseback had suddenly come into view"**

"It was drawing towards midnight when Larry and old O'Neill were crouching behind a furze bush waiting for the tinkers.

" 'The Cross of Christ about us ! ' says old O'Neill, ' what's that I see ? ' "

"A man on horseback had suddenly come into

view. There was a lighted candle on the horse's forehead over the winkers, and it flickered in the blackness of the night. Larry and old O'Neill never moved. The old man trembled in every limb. The mysterious vision moved on and never stopped till it had gone three times round the Rath. It then drew near on its return. 'God between us and harm,' said old O'Neill, 'but it's Raftery riding his bay mare.' 'O the poor *angashore*,' says Larry, 'he must be taking leave of his senses. He must be out of his mind. There is a mad strain in all the Rafterys, and 'tis breaking out in the poor divil!' Alas! it was quite plain that Raftery had taken Larry's advice, and consulted Biddy Early.

"Old O'Neill went home fast, and into the little room where Evelyn slept under the protecting gaze of St. Joseph and Michael Davitt, whose pictures adorned the walls. The old father shook her by the arm. 'Evelyn,' says he, 'the match with Raftery is broken off, You're to marry Peter O'Connor.'

"Evelyn slept no more that night, with joy. The new match was the talk of the parish, and on Shrove Tuesday there was half a mile of cars at the dragging home, and at the wedding everybody was as happy as a lamb with two mothers. The happiest man of all was Larry, proud of his achievement. But it wouldn't be fair to give no credit to Biddy for her share in the transaction. Anyhow, at the wedding Larry had a mouth like the prod of a spade with laughing, and every time that Peter and

Evelyn, who had heard of the trick, looked down at him, they too would go off into stitches.

"Evelyn's bedridden mother, who heard of Raftery's doings at midnight, was the best pleased of all with the marriage with Peter O'Connor, and she'd often say for years and years after as she lifted up her hands: 'Glory be to God every day I live, but me little girl had the escape of her life from being married to the biggest omadhaun in the County Clare.' "

When Shemus's story was over, all laughed very heartily and, said the Cockney: "We must now drink the health of the bride and bridegroom."

"And here's long life to Larry MacInerney," added the little Scotchman.

The toast was duly and copiously honoured, and they all shook hands and retired to their respective shake-downs to dream of how Larry MacInerney, the poor stone-breaker, saved an Irish colleen from a life of slavery, and made the course of true love run smooth.

## One Christmas Morning in Clonakilty



MISS JANE PENNEFATHER who verged perilously on the fifties, was a paragon of perfection. Her reserved and distant mien, slightly tinged with hauteur, was intensified by the responsibilities of her position as superintending housekeeper to her relative, Canon Stack, of Clonakilty—both long since passed to their reward. The stern virtues of Miss Pennefather were in keeping with her surroundings, for she seemed to reflect in her unbending character the cut-stone features of the presbytery, over whose culinary department, much to the disgust of the curate, she presided with precision and efficiency. For she was economic to a fault, and under her sage and experienced direction a leg of mutton went through a cycle of perpetual resurrections. She, like her revered and respected master, belonged by birth to the exclusive class, and referred to the parishioners when chatting to her chosen friends as "the peasantry"—a fact which the latter heard about and, no doubt, appreciated. Indeed, they went so far as to say: "It's she that wears the over-coat and not the



Canon," for they have a refined way of expressing themselves in Clonakilty, as everybody knows.

Canon Stack had begun his clerical career as an army chaplain, which was considered by his parents to shed more lustre on the family name than a parochial care; and it must be said that as a disciplinarian he upheld the sacerdotal dignity whether in the quiet of military quarters or in the turmoil of the tented field. So much so, that when, through sunstroke at Gibraltar, he resigned his chaplaincy, he received most congratulatory encomiums from the Commander-in-chief, and unqualified praise for his advocacy of the Temperance cause. It must be said, however, that the rank and file hailed his resignation with a feeling of undisguised relief—which, indeed, considering their propensities, will not cause surprise. It was this attitude of hostility to the flowing bowl that ensured a warm welcome for Father Stack from his bishop who immediately promoted him, on his return, to the vacant parish of Clonakilty, where his pristine health was happily restored.

This was an auspicious circumstance for Miss Pennefather, whose worldly means were then less than slender through the extravagant living of her father, who had encumbered his estates beyond redemption. Nor did the activities of the Land League, just then launched on its mission, alleviate the family fortunes of the Pennefathers, at the threshold of whose ancestral portals small weeds began to show. Poor Miss Pennefather was, then, a seasoned spinster and her future far from bright,

## **XMAS MORNING IN CLONAKILTŲ 151**

when her distinguished relative, as has been said, was installed as Canon, and appointed her to superintend his belongings and his household. She was



**Miss Pennefather**

a rabid teetotaler through temperament and dyspepsia, so much so that when an erring parishioner called to the presbytery to take the pledge after imbibing a farewell potion in the village, she caused the window of the waiting room to be opened

when he had gone, to rid the air of pungent odours. For this attitude of rigour Miss Pennefather had Canon Stack's esteem, for with him teetotalism had assumed the form of a fixed idea. He attributed all and sundry woes of his poor parishioners to the baneful glass, and though pompous and military in his deportment, his zeal compelled him to waylay tramps and tinkers on the roadside and force them then and there on bended knees to renounce for ever convivial joys by a life-long pledge. And as he usually rewarded their self-denial by a copious dole we may be sure that his exhortations met with ready acquiescence. Indeed, on one occasion the "prime boys" of the town perpetrated a joke upon his Reverence by inditing to him a letter in the handwriting of a reputable parishioner asking him to extend his pastoral care to his wife, who, as the letter said, had become a private tippler. The Canon called one day and addressed to her words of paternal advice, waived aside with bland but firm words her protestations of innocence and would not leave the house till she took the pledge, although, in truth, the dear lady was unacquainted with the use of any stimulant since she took Father Mathew's pledge near half a century before. When this got noised abroad, the merriment was general and was cordially shared in by her genial and adoring husband.

It is superfluous to note that the Canon, through birth and training, was an upholder of law and order according to the instinct of his class. He had little sympathy with the doings of the Land

League and regarded with sinister eye his curate's participation in its methods. This antipathy Fr. Kelly—the curate—well knew, and he consequently took every care to hide his movements from the Canon and from Miss Pennefather, whose dragon eyes he dreaded as much as her economic ways.

At this time an event occurred in Clonakilty, which caused the Canon deep and poignant grief and, it may be added, indignation which, of course, Miss Pennefather shared. A flaring poster was affixed at night-time to the pier of the chapel gate advocating rough and ready methods with the soldiers quartered in the town in view of possible evictions. The authorities were alarmed and a tempting reward was promptly offered for the capture of the culprit. The meshes of the law were gradually tightening on one, Pat Malone, the local organiser, and Pat decided to take refuge in the surrounding hills, preferring the shelter of the furze to the most enticing quarters in one of Her Majesty's hotels. The sympathy of Clonakilty and the country round about was with Pat in his wild retreat, but sympathy is no protection on a winter's night against biting frosts and penetrating blasts—no, not even the sympathy and silent sobs of a colleen bawn called Nancy Hogan, to whom Pat had been long engaged.

And who forgets that awful Christmas of 18—when six feet of snow blotted out the walls and hedges in one vast expanse of white? And then a thaw set in, and that made matters worse. But

it's a bad wind that blows nobody good, and Rafferty's goat appreciated the thaw, for he could get about and trespass in the neighbours' haggards. He was an old offender, and was often in pound; for he hadn't sense enough to keep his mouth shut when he came across a clump of cabbage stumps, but celebrated the discovery with a series of meggy-geg-gegs. Pat knew his ways, as indeed did the whole of Clonakilty, and so poor Pat left his mountain hiding place half famished with cold and hunger, descended hawk-like along the shade of the hedges, and was soon in the little haggard at the back of old Hogan's house. He peered cautiously through the tiny window, and sure enough there was old Hogan and his missus and Nancy—Pat's sweetheart—sitting before the fire; and the sad look on Nancy's face put the heart across in Pat.

"Meggy-geg-geg" says Pat, imitating Rafferty's prowling goat which wasn't there at all.

It's many a time Pat had done this before to make Nancy laugh as they strolled about the bohoreens on summer evenings, picking sloes.

"Meggy-geg-geg," says Pat, again.

"Bad luck from that infernal goat," exclaimed Hogan, senior; "he won't leave a head of brockley in the haggard. I'll go out and murder him stone-dead as sure as there's a ferrule on a crutch."

Old Hogan was stretching for a hatchet to carry out his fell design, but Nancy was before him. "Never mind, father, never mind, I'll go," said Nancy in trepidation, for she knew what kind of a goat was in the haggard; "you'd catch your death

of cold," and in this appeal Nancy was aided by her mother, who asked: "am I to be up all night puttin' mustard-plasters on your chest if you go out and catch your death of cold? Sit down, you ould fool." So old Hogan sat down again, and the dutiful and loving Nancy flitted out to drive away the goat. And when she came in, her father said she had been long enough out to drive away all the goats in Clonakilty.

Ah, but her advice and sympathy were sadly needed by poor Pat. There he was, famished and hungry, and afraid to go under any friendly roof for fear of the police who made their nightly rounds. And who but Nancy, with woman's never-failing resourcefulness in the hour of direst need, would have devised a plan for her sweetheart's safety that bitter December night? "Pat, darlin'" says she, "take refuge in the House of God. The peelers never search it."

"Musha, God bless you, girl of my heart," says Pat, "who'd think of it but yourself?" And he rewarded her in a way that was disagreeable to neither.

Then they said good-night, and Pat stole down by circuitous ways to the little church from which a gentle ray came out in the blackness from the ever-burning lamp: it reminded Pat of the Star of Bethlehem long ago, that he heard about first when a little boy at the school beyond.

While you'd be saying "thrapsticks" twice, Pat was in through the sacristy window, and crept softly into the church.

## 156 XMAS MORNING IN CLONAKILTY

But he nearly fell in a faint at what he saw. He turned white with fear. His limbs tottered. His mouth and eyes opened wide with fright. However, 'twas only for a moment. What he saw in the fitful gleams of a tiny lamp was the Christmas Crib with all its gorgeous, glorious figures. Kings and their attendants and shepherds were there in regal robes or sheep skins—life-size figures all—a present from the Canon to the parish. And Pat drew near and knelt down in adoration before the Babe of Bethlehem, reposing on a little straw, over Whom His Virgin Mother beamed in love, and St. Joseph stood beside in speechless wonder.

Poor Pat felt he was not alone. A feeling of companionship thrilled him through and through. No wonder. He was a poor outlaw, and had not whereon to lay his head that blessed Christmas Eve, so he prayed as he never prayed before.

But his half-clad limbs were shivering, and, said he: "sure 'twouldn't be a sin for me to get under that straw that's lying about the Crib." And sure enough he crept into the Crib and pulled some glockeens of the straw around his shivering frame. Still his blood was running cold as the chill, early hours of Christmas morning came; and as he lay there his eyes rested on the warm, regal robe on the camel-driver of the Persian King. The camel-driver, with others of the royal servants, was outside the Crib and nearer to the rails. He had a beautiful fluffy mantle on him and a big turban on his head. And, says Pat: "that's doing him no good and I'm dying of cold. Besides he's a servant—only a poor

dacint boy like myself." Casting an appealing look for forgiveness towards heaven, Pat gently removed the turban from the head of the camel-driver and took off the robe, and laid down the wooden figure and the turban on the floor, and gathering the cosy garment round about his own trembling body, sat down to rest.

But sleepless, watchful nights had worn out that giant frame, and poor Pat fell fast asleep, and he slept till morning, and would have slept throughout the day had he not been suddenly aroused by the unlocking of the big church door and the tramping of the sacristan's nail-shod boots up the resounding aisle. Pat was all in a flutter; there wasn't time to change his garb. In a moment of inspiration Pat flung some straw on the prostrate figure of the camel-driver, and scarcely knowing what he did he grasped the turban and put it on his own head, and, still arrayed in the stately robe, stood erect and immovable in the camel-driver's place at the Crib. And tawny enough Pat was, for he hadn't washed his face for a fortnight, and his jet-black whiskers, unkempt and profuse, almost enveloped his face, which the semi-obscurity partially shaded. He deeply felt the incongruity of his position, but he regarded it as a providential protection, which thought calmed his fears. Besides, five years in jail, or possibly the gallows, awaited him if he stirred.

He was waiting till the sacristan's back would be turned to restore the camel-driver to his place, but, sure, no sooner was the church open than in came



## 158 XMAS MORNING IN CLONAKILTY

half Clonakilty, and Pat had no chance to stir, but remained as immovable as a pillar in his new role as camel-driver to the Persian king—a job that



**Pat remained immovable**

carried no wages for poor Pat. All were transfixed with awe and wonder before the Crib; and the dusky camel-driver was perhaps the most admired of all the other personages, for his robes and turban

fairly sparkled with gems. And Pat heard all the comments and saw the great devotion of the people to the Babe of Bethlehem. But Pat's Oriental dignity almost left him when he saw his sweetheart, Nancy Hogan, coming in, and she looking round pillars and glancing into confession boxes and into dark corners, looking, as Pat knew, for him. He could have roared with laughter.

But it's only a span from laughter to tears, for when Nancy came over to the Crib and he saw the care-worn lines on the face of the girl of his heart, her red-rimmed eyes, her pallid features, and when he saw how fervently she prayed, he knew, for him ; when he saw her agonising look, and hot tears coming thick and fast, also for him, a big lump came in his throat and he would then and there have rushed to her and dried her eyes, and stifled her sobs, only that he feared the fright would kill her, and drive the poor people that prayed beside her out of their minds—the Lord save us. So he stood his ground, and big beady tears stole from his eyes one after the other, but fortunately, his beard absorbed them like a mop or they would have been seen. And you couldn't tell which was the sadder—he or the camel with its big, sad, crockery eyes and long face and pouting lips.

But what is that he hears ? The sound of many horses' feet in the chapel yard ; the dull sound of heavy-booted men and the clinking of sabre-cases coming up the church. On they came and Pat's sidelong glance discovers four horse-police who have been patrolling the district in search of him. All is

## 160 XMAS MORNING IN CLONAKILTY

over. They approach the Crib with steady measured step. Pat's blood runs cold; the sight almost leaves his eyes. Their foggy breaths, their frosted moustaches are but two yards away from Pat. They survey the scene. They approach. But, thank God, they only kneel down and pray like any other mortals, although they're policemen. And there Pat, through no fault of his, disguised as the Persian king's camel-driver, unrecognised even by his own sweetheart, stands immovable and safe and £500 reward on his head, and the head-constable by putting out his hand could seize him if he only knew. And the poor old head-constable, tired after his night, bows his venerable head in prayer, and Pat could see his hair split down the poll so that you could tell he was a policeman even if he were boiled.

And they went away, and Pat heaved a sigh of relief that gave him a new lease of life.

But Pat, aghra, your troubles aren't over yet. No, nor half. The Masses are all over and the church is empty; and Pat was just going to lay aside his robes and hide, when who should come into the church but Miss Pennefather, and a quill duster in her hand. "O, holy St. Patrick, will I strangle her," says Pat; for he thought, in a flash, of her landlord blood and her teetotalism and her contempt for the mere peasantry. But he controlled the thoughts of desperation that welled in his bosom as Miss Pennefather tripped gingerly into the Crib and began to dust the figures and arrange their embroidery. She went from one to another

and—Pat's feelings must be imagined, for they can't be described in cold print. On she came like Fate to the Camel-driver. She dusted his face, but he never blinked. She then straightened the turban on his head. She then arranged his wispy hair which was in sore need of curry-combing. Besides, there were straws in it from the floor where he had rested. And she plucked one straw out and was plucking another, when, by mistake she plucked out some of Pat's curls.

"Bad scan to you," roared Pat, making a grab at her, but missed.

An unearthly, frantic scream and a thud were heard, and Miss Pennefather fell backwards unconscious on the floor. In came several people, running breathlessly, and they bore the seemingly lifeless form of Miss Pennefather into the presbytery.

When Pat found the church empty he put the turban and gorgeous robe once more on the rightful owner and set him in his place, and darted across the church himself into a confession box, as quiet as a mouse. The poor lady in the meantime was being looked after by knowledgeable women, who suggested remedies untold and strange, from hot bricks to boiling water. But happily a pinch of Cork snuff, which stings the brain like pins and needles, caused a welcome sneeze, and Miss Pennefather came to, and a half mug of brandy which the cook had for the plum-pudding restored the patient her speech.

And what a tale she had to tell—which curdled the blood of all who heard it,

The Canon came upon the scene, his face one note of interrogation and incredulity.

"The camel-driver in the Crib cursed and swore, and tried to murder me," shrieked she.

"I wonder is she mad," said the Canon to himself. "Come out, Miss Pennefather, to the church." In fear and trembling she followed the Canon out, while a timid group made up the rere. Further than the centre of the church Miss Pennefather would not go, but pointed excitedly towards the figure, screaming, "That's he, he's alive; I heard him curse and swear."

The Canon went over to the figure, and examined the face and hands, and felt it, to make sure—but found it to be only unconscious wood and wax.

He returned to Miss Pennefather, who was exhilarated by the brandy; her eyes glassy, her mouth unusually mobile, her whale-bone face relaxed and wan. All this put another train of thought into the Canon's mind. He approached nearer and got a whiff of raw brandy off her breath which momentarily paralysed him. "My God, Miss Pennefather, has it come to this? Have I lived to see the day? O cursed drink. You're in the *delirium tremens*, madame. You've been imagining dreadful things. May God help you. Down upon your knees, madame; no, no explanation; down, woman, on your knees and take the pledge for life." And she obeyed in fear and trembling. Pat saw all from his hiding-place and never budged.

The Canon moved pompously towards the pres-

bytery, followed by the crushed and broken Miss Pennefather whose shame was complete when the Widow Carty who kept the local shebeen whispered to her in endearing tones: "If you ever want a little dropeen, Miss, come in by our back-door: I'll never see you dry." Miss Pennefather never smiled again.

Fr. Kelly, the curate, who was a friend of Nancy Hogan's, sauntered into the empty church by the way of no harm and soon located Pat, and from what Pat related, the poor priest had like to die with laughing, and had to go up to the organ-loft to have his laugh out. "She'll never give me cold meat again, sorra mend her," says he.

At the Clonakilty station that night Fr. Kelly, who often sent his dogs to coursing-matches, waited for the mail, and purchased a dog-ticket for Cork. When the mail steamed in, his reverence treated the guard to a nip of something warm in the refreshment room, and Pat Malone slipped into the dog-box of the van and, I needn't tell you, never once said bow-wow.

"Shunt the van on to the siding in Cork, Johnny," said Fr. Kelly to the guard; "someone will call for the dog in the morning."

Late that night Pat got safe to Cork and went to the Widow Murphy's. You know her little shop in Redmond Street. You'll always see some cold crubeens, and a currant-cake or two and a few clay pipes in the window, as well as some sweets and toffee, the cat lying on them to keep them warm for the customers. Pat got away safely to America

## 164 XMAS MORNING IN CLONAKILTY

the day after, and Nancy Hogan followed him in a week. Many that were living then are in the graveyard now, but Fr. Kelly is alive and well, more power to him! and has become a Canon, and maybe he'll be bishop some day—so mum's the word

Pat and Nancy are well and happy and their family grown up around them. The Hibernians, of whom Pat was one, keep his secret well and the strange doings of that Christmas night long ago; but all through their ranks from Boston to Chicago—from San Francisco to the Rockies, our hero goes by no other name than Pat Malone, the Persian Camel-driver from Clonakilty.

## A Tropical Festival



**I**N '48, the year of Smith O'Brien's rising, many brave Irishmen crossed the seas to distant lands to escape the bloodhounds of the law. Some went to America, and made fortunes and an honoured name both in public and in private life. Others, of more adventurous temperament, took shipping to far-off Australia, from where there came frequent tales of prosperity and sudden riches. Among these hardy spirits was one, Jim Hayes, from near the foot of Slievenamon, where he had been shepherd to a landlord, but having given shelter to the Ballingarry boys, after whom the soldiers were in hot pursuit, Jim had to say good-bye to Slievenamon one morning very early with his young wife, and her first-born babe.

After six weary months of suffering and privation their battered barque cast anchor in Sydney harbour, then fringed by primaeval forest, save where the waters lapped the newly-made wooden quays. Labour was very scarce in the nascent colony, and consequently Jim and his wife were soon secured by a squatter who owned a sheep-run on the banks of the distant Wollondilly. By slow and toilsome



stages they were carried by their master's team over rugged, semi-savage country to the sheep station, which bordered the beautiful Wollondilly river, and was hedged in by sloping, wooded hills and here and there by towering walls of cliff. Here they took up quarters in a shepherd's hut and faced the hard conditions of colonial life, with its utter loneliness and rough and ready fare. It was a new life to them, where the birds and beasts and trees and flowers were all different from those they loved in their happy little home at the foot of Slievenamon. They would have given all the blood-red parrots and gay cockatoos and graceful lyre-birds for the song of one thrush or blackbird in the glens of Kilsheelan; and the crimson waratah and gold-blossomed wattle were to them poor substitutes indeed for the daisies and primroses of their native home.

It was, however, a blessing in disguise that their duties kept them busy from dawn till dark, for Jim, as shepherd, had little leisure time, looking after the browsing flocks of sheep, which numbered several thousand, while his wife, Nelly, attended to the household cares, which were sweetened by the company of her chirruping and toddling baby boy. But she had her moments of anxiety, too, for it was known that prowling blacks had committed depredations among the flocks of neighbouring runs, and had pillaged settlers' huts for rum.

It took Jim and Nelly some time to get used to the ways of the climate, for the seasons there seemed all upended, and had changed places with the

seasons at home, July being the cold month, and December—the holy month of Christmas—the most sweltering month of the year in Australia. But for all that they did not miss attending Mass on Christmas Day, even though they had to go as far as Camden, five and twenty miles away. Two trusty horses carried them, Jim on one, and Nelly and the baby on the other. Many a ravine and deep abyss they skirted on the narrow bridle-path before they reached the church, and, indeed, many a risk they ran of being unhorsed through the steed shying at snakes or scudding wallabies. And worse than that—Jim's keen eye had seen embers of the black fellows' economic fire beside a gum-tree, which filled him with disquietude.

The heat was intense in the wooden little church, with its roof of corrugated iron—the white paint blistering in the sun's rays. And as Jim and Nelly knelt before the altar, all ablaze with summer flowers, their thoughts went back to dear old Slievenamon and Christmas Mass there in the midst of loving faces and warm friends. The remembrance of the crisp air, the snow-capped mountains, the merry voices saying, "Happy Christmas to ye both," brought salt tears to their eyes—for here they were utter strangers. But the old familiar strains of the Christmas hymn, "Adeste," which they had often heard in their village church, helped them to realise that after all 'twas Christmas Day.

Their thoughts were soon, however, brought back from home to fear and self-preservation by the announcement made by the priest—"While wishing

you all the blessings of this holy day," said he, "I feel compelled by duty to inform you of danger. I hold official tidings from the Governor that there is in the surrounding bush a remnant of the Murra-Murra tribe—so it behoves you to be on your guard."

The mention of this cannibalistic tribe, who speared sheep and cattle and slashed strips of human flesh for food off the bodies of murdered white men, caused a thrill of dread to the whole congregation, and many blanched with fear. When Mass was over the people dispersed in silence without exchanging greetings, for a pall of horror rested on them all.

Jim and Nelly—who tightly pressed her baby to her bosom—remounted their steeds and faced for home. Jim went first, in one hand the reins, in the other a full-cocked revolver. But no hostile sound was heard, no figure, white or black, met his scanning gaze in that lonely bush. They reached home in safety and thanked God with all their hearts, and revived their strength with rest and food after that perilous and anxious ride. And Jim persuaded Nelly to taste a little rum—the universal beverage of Australia at this period of early history—and Jim himself took a copious draught, and said "happy Christmas to us all and to all at home in dear old Ireland." And they said "God bless him" on their master, who had sent them from Sydney liberal Christmas stores and a goodly keg of Jamaica rum. And Nelly set about the Christmas dinner, and between the hot wind's

blast and the blazing fire her face ran with perspiration; and Jim played with the baby outside the door, who was screaming with joy at the gambols of a pet kangaroo which Jim had brought home the day before.

But, O God! what are those moving shadows in the scrub across the river, and those crawling things, black as tree-trunks, in the grass? My God, the blacks! "Nelly," cried Jim, "they're on us—the blacks are coming." He snatched up the baby and fled into the house and barred the door and raised boxes against it and a block of a giant tree they had for firewood. Nelly in distraction and dismay, threw her arms around his neck, and the poor baby wept with fear. "O, holy Mother, save us! save us!" she cried, looking towards a picture of the Madonna and Child she had brought all the way from home.

"Nelly, darling, be a woman," says Jack, "and we'll fight them for our lives; we'll die together sooner than fall alive into their hands. Take this revolver, girl, and stand near the window, and I'll defend the door."

Nelly was herself again, and her Tipperary blood rose, and those gentle eyes gleamed with grim determination. In another instant a sharp sound was heard of an impact against the wooden house, and another and another, and the horrified man and woman beheld the bone points of half-a-dozen spears sticking in through the wooden wall of their house.

Bang! and bang again! went the report of Jim's

revolver through the large key-hole, and bang! went Nelly's through the window, and yells of agony outside told them that their bullets had found their mark.

But what is that creeping sound along the roof? O God! they have climbed the house. The half-paralysed defenders heard excited jabbering on the chimney-top, and hastily unbarred the door, and, quick as thought, a chain of black human demons dropped down the chimney like one many-jointed reptile. Jim and Nelly, carrying the screaming child, fled into the open. But the nimble-footed blacks regained them in half-a-dozen strides and dashed them half-unconscious to the ground. They did not slay them—that was time enough—the blacks must first find out where they had their money and their stores, and above all, the rum, for which the black fellows would give their souls. So they danced in demoniacal glee around their prostrate victims, and cried out the only English word they knew, “rum! rum!”

But out comes one of the gang bearing the keg on his woolly, mop-like head, his white teeth showing in a fiendish leer of triumph; and the others cast down their spears and boomerangs and tomahawks of stone, and broached the vessel and gulped mouthfuls of the fiery liquid, one after the other.

“Corrobboree! Corrobboree!” they yelled: for this meant the wild native dance that precedes a feast—and that human feast was there awaiting, guarded by a savage. The sudden Australian night had by this closed down, and the weird dance

began around the bodies of the half-dead whites. The blacks, in preparation for the corroboree dance, chalked broad streaks with a white pigment on their legs and arms and faces; took up their warlike weapons and wailed a monotonous dirge; and then, uttering a wild howl, began their gyrations, brandishing spears and boomerangs. Jumping into the air, the white lines on their legs and arms, on spine and ribs, alone were seen in the darkness. They resembled skeletons, for they were dancing the dance of death; and then they seemed to climb into the air in fantastic writhings, and the white lines were like living snakes. The raw, burning spirits they had drunk set their savage blood on fire, and their teeth gnashed and their eyes glinted and shone like tigers'. Some fell down exhausted, and the others rushed once more to the cask, from which rum gurgled into their capacious-maws. And one by one they fell heavily here and there upon the ground in drunken torpor, and were strewn about as if dead.

Jim lifted his head cautiously; he hears no sound save thunderous snores. "Mama," cries the baby. This word goes to the mother's heart. She must live at least for him. Frantic signs from Jim imposing silence tell her what has happened. "They're all dead drunk—as drunk as logs," whispered Jim. "We'll tie them."

New life came back to both. With strips of harness and stout ropes they bound the hands and feet of the unconscious blacks, who were almost dead with rum, and then Jim and Nelly, with the

baby, mounted their horses and got to Camden before morning broke, and reported all at the barracks.

That same day eleven blacks, the remnant of the Murra-Murra man-eating tribe, passed through Campbelltown on their way to Sydney under armed escort.

This achievement brought fame and fortune to Jim and Nelly and, indeed, the baby. They returned no more to Wollondilly that day, nor ever more, but passed St. Stephen's Day in Jack Power's comfortable pub. in Camden.

"Begob," says Jack, "although Christmas Day is over, ye must sit down now and eat yeer Christmas dinner." And Jack proposed the only toast—"Here's God bless us all and absent friends—and high hanging to the Murra-Murra Blacks!"

## The Message from the Old Rath



OWHERE in Ireland are the mountains more silent and mysterious than in the south-west of Kerry. Your sight seems to swim in space as you gaze at them across the vast intervening valleys. Their gaunt, torrent-scarred sides and barren declivities are dotted here and there with white spots which you know are sheep. No wonder those giant upheavals of Nature, so majestic and awe-inspiring, have been the poet's theme from immemorial times ; no wonder legend has clothed them with many a tale of horror and of dread. See the white mists, like sprites with trailing robes, starting on their nightly rounds over their aerial realms, and you will easily weave stories of ghosts and goblins.

Round about you on the plains and in the valleys are raths and graveyards, cromlechs and ancient battlefields. What shouts of triumph, cries of pain, keens of bereavement have been re-echoed along those mountain-cliffs in the days that were ! and as you gaze into those sullen lakelets embosomed amid the hills like watchful witches' eyes, you surely



will confess to a chill, uncanny sense of fear. Else why will horses shy at certain spots where a cairn stands? Why do weary travellers hasten their steps when passing half-ruined beehive huts, o'er-grown with nettles or thorny briars? Have not the old people here and there heard the horseless coach—the *cóirte bodán*—go by with its muffled wheels and speechless driver. The banshee that followed the Geraldines and the Mac Carthys still wails around their weed-grown ancestral halls. Have not many heard it? Indeed, strange sounds like human voices have, too, been heard floating on the moaning midnight breeze, and that each seventh year; and these voices are in the language of the Gael. But whence are they? Have the dying words of warrior or of sage, spoken centuries ago, been imprisoned beneath dúnns and lisses or in caves, and are they now and then liberated by some underground cataclysm of Nature? It may be so, for if sea-waves never die, but rebound from the beach to live upon the deep, why should sound-waves die and not rather circle eternally around in eddies of faintest melody? If man can lock up the human voice, can not Nature in the secret recesses of her bosom preserve the spoken word? Some such theory must be invoked to explain the strange happenings at Dingle, which are still exercising the wits of archæologists and folklorists.

Dingle is situated on the fringe of Irish territory where the brooding silence is only broken by the booming of the Atlantic. There you are face to

face with the Ireland of long ago, and moated castles or ruined cloisters stand round about like sentinels.

Now where did those mysterious voices come from that were heard in the town of Dingle one memorable night, and why the ominous silence of the inhabitants on the subject ever since? They are loth to speak about the matter and hastily divert the conversation. These voices were in the Irish tongue—salutations, prayers, scraps of old songs, and maledictions to make the blood run cold! Several inhabitants arose from their beds—it was two after midnight—lights were seen in every window with a coming and going of shadows, as on the night of the big wind. Babies were heard crying and strong men grew wan.

Daylight brought courage, but no explanation of the untoward event. The fowl remained unfed, the cows un milked and the pigs squealed for their mess. The head-constable with no belt round him, and note-book in hand, was interrogating all and sundry—for Dingle was in the streets that morning. Some, who boasted that they were hide-bound against superstition, were inclined to ascribe the voices to the *fuireós*, and advanced the ingenious solution that he had manned an aeroplane with Gaelic speakers, or that he had concealed gramophones with Gaelic records here and there in the town.

But the *fuireós* looked as calm as a missionary catechist at his questioner, over whom he towered, and simply said: “*Δηλ, διοὐ εἰλέε ἀγὰτ!* have

## 176 MESSAGE FROM THE OLD RATH

sense, do you think we have money to throw away?" This satisfied the crowd or he might have been dropped into Pedlar's lake.

The truth came out when an old man, who had cattle near the old rath, arrived in town. You know the place well. A circular wall, blotched white with age and begirt with bushes, encloses the old graveyard rath. There are ogham stones strewn about it, hugging their ancient secrets to their stony breasts. The man had gone into the rath to light his pipe, but was astounded and horrified to see a heap of fresh dug earth, and behind it the gaping mouth of a newly-opened cavern, through which a cold wind was blowing from abyssmal depths. He could hear the roaring of a subterranean torrent far beneath him. From the sides of the cavern human bones protruded and a skeleton hand still held a rusty red-encrusted sword. Some antiquary had evidently been for many nights at work in that secluded rath, and had suddenly come upon the ghastly hole, wherein he must have fallen, for his belongings lay strewn about upon the grass. The appalling news was received in breathless silence on the streets of Dingle that memorable morning. And now, which holds the key to the mysterious murmurings in the Irish tongue the preceding night—over and about the town—superstition or science?

We know that when once some sheep had cropped the grass in a rath without their owner's knowledge, those same sheep were left unpurchased at the

## MESSAGE FROM THE OLD RATH 177

fair, for who would eat meat fattened on the dead ? We know that even a famishing man will not take wood to burn from a rath : we know that only an outcast like Cain would disturb a rath with plough or spade.

But science has a word to say on the Dingle problem ; for the old people have a tradition, which they tell at wakes and on November nights, that that same desecrated rath, whose name was now on everybody's lips, was once in the hoary past a banquet-chamber with an underground passage to the sea, and one night a great massacre took place, the guests were tossed in tangled heaps into the mouth of the gulf, and rocks and earth piled over them.

One may now ask did that opened cavern give up those echoes which were imprisoned along its rocky sides and convoluted roof for untold centuries ? And were those the voices which were heard over Dingle, or were they the spirits of the departed come back, because their earthly abode was profanely invaded ? As the matter is even now occupying the attention of the learned in antiquarian lore, common prudence counsels us to suspend our judgment and calmly await the verdict of science.

It was about the time of these uncanny events which had evolved themselves in Dingle and the neighbourhood, that Dan Donovan was one evening walking down towards North Wall, in Dublin. Dan was a rabid Gael—the rigid sort. His little

garden in Drumcondra was a piece of Irish Ireland, for he had built there a rockery beehive hut like the one on *Sceitg mheit*. An ogham stone with half-defaced markings, too, was there to be seen, in front of which Dan often sat for hours meditating on the days that were. His ingenuity was taxed to the uttermost how to bring back the language of our ancestors once more. But, as I was saying, he was walking one evening for himself in a fit of despondency at the decay of our national ideals, down towards North Wall, when a foreign ship attracted his attention. She was bruised and battered, rusty and rakish. The coloured crew wore red turbans. And the neighbourhood became pervaded with the pungent fragrance of curry, for it was dinner-time on the ship.

Dan boarded the vessel, although the man on guard, wearing a blouse and a blue bottle breeches, beside which hung a scimitar, confronted him, and asked him where he was going, in a foreign tongue. "*fas a' beatac*," says Dan, and passed on. There were boxes of cinnamon and caraway seeds on board, and tea-chests with flaring pictures on them of Cingalese, sitting under palm trees like tailors, smoking cigars as big as cork legs.

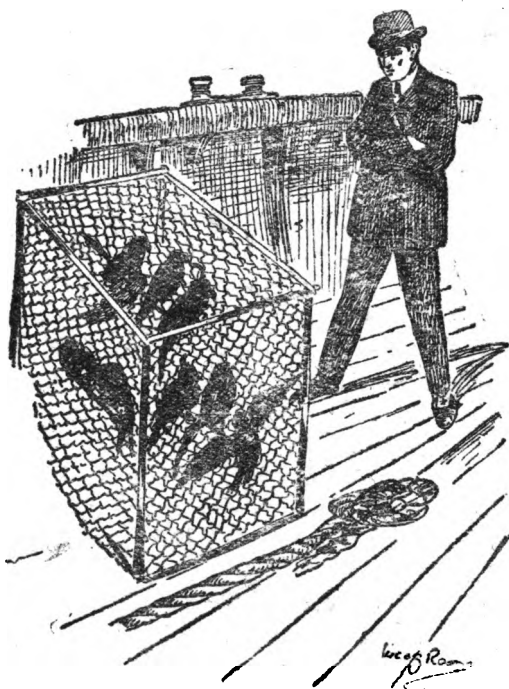
Donovan moved over towards a large receptacle like a colossal hen-coop, which was full of strange, many-coloured birds, that looked as if they had just flown down from a rainbow. They chattered gaily in some blackman lingo.

So Dan suddenly became serious. He struck a Napoleonic attitude: he folded his arms and

## MESSAGE FROM THE OLD RATH 179

surveyed the crooked-bill tribe, who were silent while they, too, made an inventory of Donovan.

Now, Donovan never spoke English-except under the influence of strong emotion. He spoke it now.



**He folded his arms and surveyed the crooked-bill tribe**

With a sudden gesture, he slapped his left palm with his right, and said out loud: "Be Herrins?" It was evident that Donovan's thinking-pan was 100° in the shade with an idea. He turned round

and asked to be shown to the captain's quarters—for he knew that captains bring foreign animals on spec, when conveying cargoes of tea and the like, to European parts.

Donovan, who had lodging with him people that knew no Irish, and consequently were of doubtful virtue, always carried his money about him, and a good job it was too. So he rattled his sovereigns as he entered the captain's cabin.

"How much for the lot?" says he.

"So much," says the captain.

"I'm your man," says Donovan.

That night the coop with its screeching contents was installed in Donovan's little garden, to the consternation of his mother, who exclaimed: "Ah! Dan, don't forget that if the Donovans were poor, they were always respectable, an' there never was one o' them a showman yet."

"Mother," said Dan, "swear you'll never let it past your lips, what I'm going to tell you. I'll teach those parrots the Gaelic language, an' they'll be the saving of Irish Ireland. I'll shame the shoneens."

The bewildered mother didn't know what to say or do, so she said the Rosary that the Lord wouldn't let Dan out of His sight. Dan took no supper, so occupied was he with his absorbing project. Hot night and all as it was, he sweated at his work, repeating words and phrases and salutations and scraps of the old strain; and, so far did he succeed, that before twelve struck from the fire-station his plumed and crested pupils had improved

marvellously and could call each other names, and curse by the false gods of India, in the language of the Gael.

It goes without saying that Dan's cat had no welcome for the parrots. The night they arrived she stayed in—the first time for seven years. She had erroneously imagined that cats were the only imitators of human speech so that envy coloured her antipathy. Besides, she hated Irish, and with good reason, for on one occasion an organiser wearing fine 'Irish manufacture' boots came to see Dan, and the visitor gave her a kick, saying "Δμαc ar reo," "Get ou'r this," and so she became a sworn enemy to the cause, as will presently be seen. Along with the parrots in the coop there were a few eggs, and Dan put them under a hen of his, which fortunately was then unemployed. One only came out, and the offended look of the hen when she saw the new arrival was a classic in its way. She abandoned it; and Dan took charge of the foundling and rolled it in flannel in front of the fire until it was big enough to join the seniors. And sure enough this new arrival heard nothing but Irish all around him, so that he was a little native speaker in no time, and was evidently proud of his fine feathers as he walked about on his heels on the floor. The cat was coiled up near the fireplace purring to herself when she saw the object on the floor approaching her. At first she didn't believe her eyes, but two seconds later she didn't believe her ears; for what the juvenile parrot said



was "Cionnur tá tú?" with an inquisitive side-long tilt of her head. Memories of the organiser's boot came back to pussy. She made no reply to the inquiry after the state of her health, but what she said to herself, in the language of Foley Street, was: "Irish? So *you* are at it too: well, I *am* darned."

'Twas too much for her. Her back slowly but surely 'rus,' her whiskers became as wire, then was heard the whirr of an electric fan, you would say; this was followed by an unearthly screech, not certainly from the cat, whose mouth was full of the native speaker's tail—red, blue, yellow, and green feathers—which concealed pussy's whole countenance with the exception of two guilty eyes, which glared from the top of a ladder. The native speaker made tracks for the dressing room.

When Dan Donovan's academy had reached a creditable stage of volubility, in which it must be said irregular verbs seemed to predominate, he determined to attack that stronghold of the Gall—Rathmines. He distributed his feathered pupils in the trees of the most fashionable quarters, where the hoity-toitiest came and went. That night nothing but Irish was heard along that "road." The air was full of it. The people at one side of the street thought it was those on the opposite side that were speaking Irish, and vice-versa, and the surprise was general that such a barbarous language should be heard in Rathmines, of all places. Indeed, no one was more surprised than Montmorency Lushington, Esq., J.P., who was returning late from his

club, feeling 'very well, thank you.' He heard the Irish language the whole length of the street. He didn't know who was speaking it—whether those on the other side of the street, or the Trinity boys on the top of the trams. He was fit to be tied, *ní b' nac iongnad*. Irish in Rathmines!! It was simply too shocking for words.

When he reached the end of the road he strode up to a somnolent bobby—a Nelson's Pillar in miniature—who was thinking of nothing and doing it well. Robert, seeing the dangling eye-glass and the dawdling Johnnie and the spats, scented a J.P. He also scented champagne.

"Can you explain to me, sir," exclaimed Montmorency, "why you allow Irish to be spoken all over Rathmines? You're neglecting your duty, sir!"

"Well, by jingo, I'll not neglect it now," says the bobby, "for you're either drunk or crazy, and aither'll do. Come with me." And he came as a lark with a hawk.

The following morning the court was packed. Montmorency's distracted wife was there with medical testimonials as to his sobriety and sanity, but all to no use. His Worship decided that any man who said he heard Irish talked all over Rathmines must be mad, and turning to the prisoner he said, "I recommend you, sir, a change of air, but especially a change of whiskey. Your favourite brand must be putrid. In view of your former good character I'll only give you till the rising of the court."

And Montmorency was removed, not without a scuffle.

But more important work was before the Academy. The children on the fringe of Irish-speaking districts must be put to shame. A tarpaulin over the coop baffled the prying eyes and excited the questioning tongues of the Corkonians as Dan hied him towards Tralee in the southern express. Thence, Dingle was his objective, and certainly the vocabulary of the team was shaken up to some purpose as the brave little engine took running jumps at hills, and with eyes shut and teeth clenched dived into bottomless glens. All went well till they got to Damp station. This was appropriately christened one wet day. Here shunting was to be done. Here a cup of tea with goat's milk may be got, which long dwells in memory: in fact it competes with the scenery.

A Dublin girl on one occasion while sampling this rare beverage was asked to view the scenery. "Oh! bother it," gurgled she out of her cup, "you can see that in the Cinema, but you can't get goat's milk everywhere."

Well, a porter, a typical Kerryman, was pacing the station—fine bullet head, bright complexion, beady eyes glinting with cuteness. He had caught a glimpse of the contents of the coop and was on pins and needles with curiosity.

"What have you got there?" said he to Dan, who was wearing a fur-collar coat of which he got a loan from Cathal MacGarvey, and looked very foreign.

"A consignment of young turkeys from Dublin," replied Dan.

"Young turkeys, indeed!" retorted he of the kingdom—"did anybody ever see young turkeys in June?"

"Did you never hear of an incubator?" says Dan? But the descendant of the Sугan Earl was unconvinced, especially as the academy began making remarks in Irish, and the Kerry porter couldn't tell who was making them, and laid the blame on Dan. The biggest of the parrots—a Macaw with a drooping tail a yard long and a bill crooked downwards like an alderman's hand paying for a vote—was persistently loquacious. By the same token the parrot's name was Cetewayo. He had acquired some strange language in his time during a circus tour in Abyssinia, which it was part of Dan's curriculum to unteach him. When Cete-wayo heard the dialogue outside, he croaked out "Δαμασάν μόη! Ceann feóla!! Cora fadó!!!" which, all by a remarkable coincidence, fitted the porter's natural features to the inch. Nor was the latter's indignation lessened when the little native speaker, perky in a new tail, chirped in in his piercing treble "Sean-rean-bóigadóan." Fortunately the engine whistled and snorted out of the station and tobogganed and twisted away towards Dingle.

The intelligence of my readers will have led them to guess by this the cause of the mysterious voices in that historic neighbourhood that eventful night in Dingle. The academy dispersed itself on the

chimneys of the town, and in the creepy hours after midnight rolled off their stock and store of Gaelic.

As has been said, the inhabitants were filled with consternation. Wouldn't the likes frighten you or me? The prim, polite, sleek and slender clerk, who had brought the latest instalment of civilisation from Whitechapel, London, got the biggest fright of all, for he had that very night at the ball enchanted the company by his singing of "Mammy's Little Alabama Coon," and "I like you in your Sunday clothes, Susannah," and by his performance of the Rag-time turkey-trot. Well, he got the biggest fright of all, as I was saying; for Cetewayo's bass voice sang down his chimney: "An bhaca tú mo ríóirín?" and other scraps of Gaelic and Abyssinian mixed. No wonder the woman that washes out remarked when the poor clerk turned up at his desk in the morning, haggard and slim, "he looks as if he'd been rolled out of a mangle, he does."

When the popular Chairman of the North Dublin Union called at the bank about noon to cash a cheque and help to form the nucleus of a fund to start a Gaelic College in the district, who should fly in and perch beside the bank clerk's noddle but the dauntless Cetewayo. "Bail ó 'Dia ort," he chirped, addressing himself to the visitor, "is vóca go bfuil aimpéar bheas agaid i ntuib Ráca!" He evidently thought the chairman had strolled over from charming Caherdaniel by the sea. The bank clerk could only splutter, "Out, out; get out of here! I suppose, sir," turning to the visitor,

"the little imp thinks you are another of the *cares*."

The academy retired to Conor Hill before day-break, and that same morning Cetewayo was near being the death of a peasant in the Ventry neighbourhood, who was giving milk to a calf out of a pail, when he saw an awful vision on the clothes line—Cetewayo, no less. "*ní fearadán an mbeadó b'raon poitín agat?*" he asked the man, and made other mannerly advances. Even the calf looked up, slobbery and all as he was. The man laid down the pail, nodded, "Good mornin' yer honour," as he backed away towards the kitchen door trembling; and went in and told his wife he had heard and seen his Sable Majesty this time for a certainty. She said nothing, but put on her shawl and ordered him—for he was the *cliamhain irteac*—to come down to the doctor.

The medico heard the symptoms. He called the wife into the next room and communicated to her the information that a very bad brand had made its appearance in Dingle of late. "There are others seeing queer things, too," said he. "But this is the worst case of the jigs I have met in my whole professional experience. Take him to Mount Melleray for a fortnight."

Dan's work was done. He left the academy as a present to the neighbourhood to put the little Dingledecooshers to shame for not speaking their own language. "But the good old Kerry drop is in them yet," says Dan. "Their ancestors put up the bravest and the longest fight against the

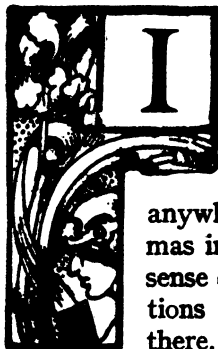
invaders in the records of our land"; and he went back to Dublin.

The subsequent fortunes of the academy may be briefly told. They took refuge in a fine clump of trees, which form a grove on the Widow Mac-Astrakan's farm. Her son is not long back from America. He was in the nutmeg business and sign is on it, he made money; for, being short of nutmegs once, he made them of wood in a sausage-machine. You see he felt sensitive about disappointing customers.

Well, one day after his return home, as he was walking about the farm, and Cetewayo & Co. were talking in the grove, a German student came by and took out a note-book and wrote down what the parrots were saying. That was enough for the local enterprise. The returned Yank went into Dingle and bought two tons of corrugated iron, and ran a fence round the grove and put a door and a ticket-window on it. You'd think it was another invasion of Danes was happening, so many came to learn Irish at half-price. But what's more wonderful, the Dingleites have got back their manhood and don't call the Gaels "Law Bra's" any longer, for, as the *fuiréog* says, the worst sign of slavery would be that people should strangle their own language in their breasts."

Latest files from Dingle are encouraging. Cetewayo is very pensive of late and it is surmised that he is thinking out a plan for giving certificates to his Scandinavian pupils. So n-e-i-n-g-i-o an t-ao teir!—Success, to him—So say all of us.

## An Antipodean Gum-Log



**I**CAN speak for scores of thousands of Irish people in saying that we never get used to the Australian Christmas, although faith is as strong there and friends as warm-hearted as anywhere within creation's rim. Christmas in Australia is Antipodean in every sense of the word, and old-word associations are reversed, or rather, up-ended there. You want no Yule-log when the thermometer is up to a hundred, and as for frost or snow, Sydney-siders, at least, have never seen either. Of course, the climate has changed a bit in Ireland in latter years, but the Christmas which we love is the Christmas of our youth—a white world, a frozen pool, crisp air, a starry sky, and that mysterious quiet over the face of Nature lulled in her great winter sleep, the little robin with his flaunting waistcoat coming to the door or window, and the furtive, yellow-beaked blackbird starting with a merry roulade beneath a cosy hedge.

The early morning Mass in the country church, which beams like a beacon-light on the height out on the enshrouding darkness, is a cherished remembrance, and the well-muffled groups hastening



thither over creaking frosty fields and roads with their "Merry Christmas" salutations to everyone. The holly-bedecked altar and the frosty breath of the people and the old, old Christmas hymn—all this and more the exile carries away in sweet remembrance across the world's seas, and often in the crowding years in after life he recalls those happy scenes, and at each succeeding Christmas the past lives again for him.

But it must not be thought that Christmas in the far Southern lands has no compensations, for the Bush is in the zenith of its charms in December—the mid-summer month—and the grass, such as it is, is begemmed with flowerets of many hues, while the flashing wings of parrots give a rain-bow tint to the sombre gum trees, and the snowy flannel flower sets off the golden glories of the wattle that strews its yellow leaves around. To be sure, the heat is oppressive and all the windows of the church—with, like enough, a corrugated iron roof—are open wide, and all the women folk are dressed in immaculate white, and make fans of their handkerchiefs to get a little cool. Outside the church countless horses are tied to the fences—hung up is the proper expression—and every shape of car and cart await their human freight; under every car and beside every horse is the faithful sheep or cattle dog, and many a snarling bout or worse punctuates the sermon which is proceeding inside the edifice. Thirty, forty or fifty miles are only a circumstance to an Australian on Christmas morning or, indeed, on any Sunday.

How often have I seen a young mother with a baby on each arm riding tens of miles along a bridle track on her way to Mass ; and the lusty bush babies can give an account of themselves when they are gathered within the four walls of a church—so strange is it all to them. But, of course, these leather-lunged exhibitions are the most melodious music to the mamas, though they often prevent the preacher from getting past his second point—for which the congregation is heartily grateful, especially if there are hot winds like blasts from a lime-kiln blowing from the parched plains of the West.

In these countries here at home Christmas is a domestic festival par excellence. Everyone tries to be with his or her own on that holy day. The trains to a late hour are laden with festive youths and lasses, and the scattered members of the household assemble beneath the old roof-tree and fall under the spell of affection and love which, perhaps, absence and business cares have for the while relaxed. But in Australian cities Christmas loses somewhat its beautiful associations of domesticity, for everyone that can, goes away from home to the sea-resorts or to cool retreats in the hills and mountains. For at Christmas time the weather is most oppressive, and the heat is reflected from the flags and tar-paved pathways of the cities, and all who can, get away in the Christmas holidays to recuperate their wasted vigour and build up their flagging forces.

But let no one imagine that Christmas in Australia at a sea-resort, or in the mountains, is bereft

of its sacred festive character. Trust the Australians to attend to their higher duties and then to enjoy themselves. They go prepared for the camping-out. Everybody brings part of the commissariat. They know shady nooks where to make their spread and set the fire. A gay Lothario, in white ducks and panama hat and the latest in footgear, acts as pioneer, and beats the ground about to rout a possible lurking snake. He then surveys the place to see there are no bull-dog ants on the warpath with cannibalistic tastes. Then he has a look further afield to see if there may, perchance, be any Queensland cattle in the neighbourhood, and if he sees a mob of them and one of them away by herself, he knows she's a born suffragette, and will play up with her horns by and by and make mischief. So the surveyor reports progress and chooses another spot.

At these camping out parties everyone has to work, including the ladies. As the weather is blistering, and mutton and beef and fowl won't keep, there are tinned meats to be opened, and there are bottles to be uncorked to keep down the temperature, there is choice china not to be broken by awkward young men, and if one of them interferes with the spherical perfection of a jelly he soon knows all about it.

Of course there is plum pudding, and the funny man of the party shakes hands with everybody and says a last farewell and writes to his mother before risking his piece of concoction—all this to rile the fair concoctor of the viand. Later on he cries out

"snakes" and jumps three feet in the air, and everyone upsets their tea or custard; but it's all a false alarm, and they pelt him with oranges and bananas, or belabour him with their fists. I recall an incident of a lately arrived dude being put sitting in the place of honour—on an ant-hill. His electro-plated politeness wouldn't allow him to admit that he was being slowly devoured by untold millions of the enraged aboriginal insects, and his excruciating expression of countenance, I regret to say, excited no sympathy from the nobler sex, to whom he had been a bit patronising and snobby.

In farther-out parts of the Bush, Christmas Day is celebrated in a more robust and exciting manner. We will say you are on in a closely wooded region with plains here and there. The boundary riders and the youths of the squattocracy meet after a dinner which includes parrot pie—I have seen a hen-coop full up of screaming cockatoos and parrots awaiting their turn to be cooked—and a dingo hunt is proposed or a chase after a kangaroo. At the very word kangaroo the big, lanky, raw-boned dogs yelp approval, and the cavalcade starts across country and the old 'roo will lead them a merry dance as he negotiates six-foot fences with a spring off his triple-expansion tail.

The 'roo is only dangerous when he stands with his back against a tree and rips dogs with the great nail in the toe of his hind feet. Or if he gets into a pool he stands and drowns the dogs like kittens with his fore feet. On one occasion, when the 'roo was cornered, one Patsy O'Gorman dismounted

and faced him. Patsy fancied himself as a wrestler on the collar-and-elbow and the catch-as-catch-can principle, and gripped the 'roo by the throat. Poor Patsy had no toe-nails worth mentioning, but the 'roo had, and he lifted his hind-paw and put his big nail inside Patsy's Sunday collar, and gave one downward reef to the ground, including Patsy's leather belt, and reduced Patsy to a state of aboriginal nakedness. The 'roo was getting up the other paw to the latitude of Patsy's mouth, when the latter did a back somersault with most creditable agility, and thus missed being ripped from the chin to the instep. Anyhow the party came to the rescue, and they had kangaroo-tail soup for supper—a most *recherche* dish.

And so Christmas isn't half bad in the back-blocks, and, if all comes to all, they can dig out a tiger-snake, or burn a giant iguana out of a log, or climb after 'possums or bears.

Even the station-hand, who lives away by himself, sometimes in a bark hut in a lonely spot, feels the inspiration of Christmas Day ; or the drover who is taking a mob of sheep or cattle on the stock-route to distant Melbourne. One of these, by name Jim Dooley, was once in charge of a flock of Conroy's sheep, on a four hundred mile march to a change of pasture, down the banks of the Murrumbidgee. So Jim's wife in Sydney didn't know what part of the country he was in for Christmas. But she wasn't going to let Christmas pass without sending him a letter from herself and the children. The sheep were everything, but her poor Jim was only a drover,

and known to few by name in the runs he was passing through. So she addressed the letter :—

To Jim Dooley,  
Care of Conroy's Sheep,  
Along the Murrumbidgee,

and, of course, Jim got it. Why wouldn't he ?

What a boon a letter from home is to the son of Erin's Isle away in the silent sequestration of the Bush—especially a letter from those he loves in the old sod. He is fanning himself with his hat at the door of his humpy or under a gum tree, and the postman gives him a letter, and out falls a Christmas card with the old familiar scene—a village church, a snowy landscape, a little red-robin on a fence, and underneath, a motto :—

“ Come back, aroon, to the land of thy birth.”

No wonder a tear-drop glistens in his eye, for Austral suns have not parched the old love within him for kith and kin and country ; and he feels himself singing the sweet strains stored up in memory from bygone times :—

“ Ould Ireland, up from my heart of hearts, I  
bid you the top of the morning.”

## Jeremiah Dwyer, Citizen of Ireland



PEOPLE often say no matter how much you travel you will always be proud of your native county. But the case of Jeremiah Dwyer, of Tipperary, does not bear out the theory, but rather contradicts it, and shows what environment can do in changing a man's character and weaning him from his most cherished predilections.

At nineteen, Jeremiah was a typical Tipperary boy, open-hearted, open-handed, free, fearless and friendly. He captained the hurling team of Boherlane, and led them to many a victory against bordering parishes and, what is more, against bordering counties. His manly qualities endeared him to all the boys, and well they knew that no man would dare to disparage Tipperary in his presence; for he loved its very soil, and he believed that the sun shone brighter on his native county than anywhere else in the world wide. He was convinced, too, in his inmost soul that Tipperary men were the best men going. It might be the privilege of people of other counties to boast of

them ; but it was a Tipperary man's right, it being the premier county.

But Fate and his father, more especially his father, decided that Jeremiah should emigrate to America.

Those who were present at his send-off at Goold's Cross station will not easily forget the parting scene and how the hurlers ran for half-a-mile after the train crying out : " Good-bye, Jer, God bless you—the Tipperary boys will never forget you." Indeed they might have added, "neither will the girls," for Jer was a great favourite as a partner at the cross-roads dance. But, of course, they all knew that Nellie Ryan, of Rossmore, was broken-hearted at Jer's departure. This, however, is by the way.

Now would anyone think that Jeremiah would change, I do not say from his regard for Nellie, for change he never did—but from his deep and profound conviction that Tipperary was the best place, and Tipperary people the best people in the world ? Yet he did. The plains of Texas without fences or stone walls or hedges, but vast and far-reaching, and bounded only by the distant horizon, opened up a new vista before him, which he had never dreamt of before in his native townland, where every farm was cornered off by itself and half-an-hour brought you to the confines of another parish, and two or three hours to the confines of another county. Nor was the human element by which Jeremiah was surrounded in his new life less strange. His mates of many tongues and colours made a



promiscuous gathering of adventurers and fortune-seekers, whose moral qualities represented human nature at its best and at its worst. Yet he shared their toil, their joys and sorrows, such as they were, and so began his course of education in the great university of humanity. His new geographical and social environment rubbed off by degrees the narrow prejudices of parochialism and countyism, which had hitherto taught him to regard all strangers with suspicion. Around the camp fire of nights he heard tales of many strange lands, and Tipperary began to get smaller in proportion as a new world became larger before his mental vision. He might, indeed, have forgotten Ireland altogether were it not for a fortunate event that came in the guise of ill-luck. For, breaking bronchos on the plains well-nigh broke Jer's health, too, and he took to the quieter life of prospecting for gold with an Irish companion out in the sequestrations of the Far West. Fortunately for Jer, his fellow-exile—a schoolmaster's son from Clonoulty—possessed some historic books about Ireland, and these were for both an antidote against the murderous loneliness of the backwoods.

They beguiled many a weary night and day in the rainy season, reading about the Ireland of long ago, before the Danes and the Normans came. Lying on their backs on the grassy floor of their tent they were, for hours at a stretch, back in pre-Christian times among Druids and cromlechs. They traced in thought the roads that led from Tara, when there were no county boundaries, nor petty differences and local prejudices. They

followed the heroes of cattle-spoils ; and the long journeys of Brian's fleet-footed messengers across our ancient country were to the two lonely friends as interesting as romances.

To make a long story short, Jeremiah Dwyer is in four years' time, almost unknown to himself, a changed man ; his mind has expanded ; his love for Ireland from being local has become national ; he loves every sod of his native land, and when wonderful and sudden luck rewarded his toil in the gold-fields he lost no time in returning to the shores of Erin. But he is different now from the Jer of by-gone times. His years abroad have mellowed and enlarged his views ; his travels have cured his former narrowness of vision and now that he is back in Ireland some things strike him as peculiar. The spirit of countyism, above all, was to Jeremiah a great bug-bear. It seemed to him so mean and miserable, so opposed to a great generous love of Ireland. It must be confessed, however, that he had to exercise self-repression, for often his old self with its memories and traditions of a local tinge asserted themselves in his breast, but he curbed these chafing emotions by the restraint of his superior self. In fact he tried without avail to exercise the same restraint over the very Tipperary spirit of his old love, Nellie Ryan, of Rossmore. "Have we not a common country ?" he would exclaim. "What does it matter what town or county a man comes from if he is a good man ! Why will not people rise above this pettiness ?"

As Jeremiah, now in the enjoyment of a com-

fortable fortune, travels over Ireland improving his archæological knowledge among moss-grown mounds and ancient ruins, it must be said he ran up against countyism in its most virulent forms in the towns he stayed in. In one place he heard a family referred to as "strangers" because their ancestors had settled in the town "only eighty years" before. He heard one irascible old lady whose land bordered on the episcopal property, referring to His Lordship as "an intherloper," because he hailed from an adjacent county. Most readers have visited a town called promiscuously Ballymore and Ballybeg, because a small stream and a small bridge separate the two, which are in different counties. The bridge is only a hop, step and a jump across, but Jeremiah was astounded one day when a Ballymore man whispered in his ear, as he pointed to the other side: "Mr. Dwyer," says he, "you can never trust a Ballybeg man." On another occasion Jeremiah was breakfasting in the Dublin hotel usually patronised by County Kilkenny men—because it is kept by a man from the marble city. A gentleman at a table close by who had just opened an egg suddenly put it aside. It was evident the egg would be more useful as an electioneering projectile than otherwise. "Waiter," roared the gentleman, "where did these eggs come from?" "From Kilkenny, sir," replied the knight of the napkin. "Oh, indeed!" replied his questioner, "then I suppose they fed the hens on turnips, which make the eggs just a bit sour." And the Kilkenny man proceeded to eat *that* Kilkenny egg. Indeed it was

hard to assign limits to the craze of countyism, for Jeremiah averred that it invaded every department of life. In fact, on one occasion he heard a Co. Donegal reverend mother saying Sister "So-and-so is excellent," and then, *sotto voce*, she added, "although she's not from Donegal." Again, it came to our friend's knowledge that a distinguished orator from Clare was asked once to preach a dedication sermon in Cork. An old woman from beside the Lee declared, after the sermon, that "plenty of our own clergy from Cork could praich him black in the face." All these instances of localism or, rather, virulent countyism, Jeremiah carefully noted in his diary, for he was nursing a project which was just taking shape in his mind—a project both laudable and national.

He was seriously thinking over the possibility of forming a society of travelled people like himself, to raise his countrymen from the ruck of parochial pettiness in which he saw them, to enable them to look at Ireland, if not through cosmopolitan, at least through national, spectacles. He found able sympathisers; and to launch the movement successfully, they had a medal cast bearing the words: "Citizen of Ireland," which each member would wear.

Those who were present will not readily forget that initial meeting. A poster outside the door of the Mansion House, kindly placed at the disposal of the conveners, simply announced that the subject of discussion was *anti-countyism*. The general public did not quite grasp the significance of

this title, but it was sufficient for them that the *meeting was anti-something* and they rolled up to a man with their jaws set.

By common accord Jeremiah was voted to the chair. He appeared agitated, for not only the surging, expectant crowd, but the presence of his best girl, Nellie Ryan from Rossmore, tall, fair and stately, contributed to his excitement. His presidential address on the occasion is memorable:—

“Ladies and gentlemen,” said he, “there is an evil in our midst which is cramping our mental powers and limiting our national outlook—I refer to the evil of countyism, which, to speak figuratively, means to live in a tea-pot and look at the world through the spout. This miserable hole-and-cornerism is exhausting our energies in internecine conflict—enfeebling our efficiency as a people, and clogging the wheels of progress.

“What would Brian Boru or Conn of the Hundred Battles have thought of this local pettiness? It is true,” continued Jeremiah, “that I hail from Tipperary, but I strive to forget this fortuitous circumstance of my birth and to merge Tipperary in Ireland. (‘Faix, if you ever get into throuble,’ said a voice, ‘it’ll do you no harm to have a Tip. on the jury’) I scorn the innuendo,” cried Jeremiah in vehement tones. “I breathe an atmosphere higher than county boundaries or parish fences. If I may take a poetic license.” (‘Oh, begor,’ said the voice, ‘make it a publican’s one. The Tips. run half of them in the city, especially the good ones.’)

At this juncture a Fermanagh man with an accent

like a circular saw, rose and gave it as his opinion that we ought to preserve county rivalries, which, he declared, stimulate our energies, and that the divergent elements of our country could only be unified by keeping out everything English, and only using Irish-made goods. The Fermanagh man was a well-known Irish Industrialist.

This reference put Jeremiah on his metal. His voice betrayed emotion and ill-restrained rage—his face quivered as he shouted in scornful tones: "Irish manufacture—Irish manufacture—here is a man advocating Irish manufacture, and yet he is an upholder of countyism that we are striving to combat. What are the counties of Ireland? Who made them? Was it not England? They, therefore, are the biggest incubus of English manufacture in the whole land. And here is this propagandist of Irish manufacture advocating that system which has erected artificial barriers all over Ireland and turned it into an English chess-board. To-day, ladies and gentlemen," continued he, "we see the laughable circumstance of persons calling themselves Gaels engaging in hurling contests according to the divisions of English-made counties, and when a team wins, the members cheer with joy and boast out of their county. Of old, our fathers were proud out of their Clans—Clans of flesh and blood—to-day, Irish youths are proud out of a county—a mere geographical expression."

It goes without saying that Jeremiah Dwyer came forth from the meeting a celebrity—a public man. His familiar figure was known all over

Dublin, and his proud designation was whispered as he passed, wearing his medal of membership with its motto: "Citizen of Ireland." His picture was in all the papers, many of which devoted leaders to the project. In a word, he was a well-known popular personage.

One pang alone marred the pleasure of his triumph; for Nellie Ryan, of Rossmore, not only turned an angry scowl on him, when he rejoined her after the meeting, but turned on her heel as well, saying: "I'll have no dealings with a man that renounces the county he belongs to, gallant Tipperary—the county I'm proud of." And she left him dumb-struck, and as she walked away looked taller, fairer and statelier than ever in Jer's eyes.

But in his war on countyism Jeremiah Dwyer had right on his side. Who will deny it that was present at the great hurling match between Tipperary and Kerry at Jones' Road on a certain memorable occasion? Was not the event looked forward to with feverish anticipation by all the Tipperary and all the Kerry people in Dublin, not to say in the rest of Ireland? Can we forget the big posters on all the walls, and Tipperary *versus* Kerry in letters a foot long on them? And the morning of the match what crowds of sympathisers waited at Kingsbridge for the excursion trains from Tipperary and Kerry respectively! You could tell by their faces it was war to the knife. And when the Tipperary train arrived what a cheer welcomed the brave boys in sweaters under top-coats as they were hurried off by a multitude of warm-hearted

friends, "Musha, more power to the Galtees"; and "long live the Divil's Bit!" were the words of good omen which greeted them. Nor were the Kerries less enthusiastic when the Caherciveen excursion steamed in and the engine gave a squeal of a whistle (as a Cashel man scoffingly remarked) "the dead spit of the Kerry accent."

Pshath, man, enthusiasm isn't the word. There wasn't a spare car or cab in the city that wasn't tearing out full speed to Jones' Road. One posting establishment had even to fall back on the black horses that usually went to Glasnevin. One of these was under a sidecar full of Kerry hurlers. The poor horse had been going to Glasnevin for fifteen years. But the driver made him know with the whip that he was going to a hurling match. Sure what did me poor ignorant old horse do but turn up of a sudden towards Dunphy's corner on the way to Glasnevin, and he was halfway up before he was reined in. The Tipperary boys and their friends saw the horse's absent-mindedness and roared laughing at the Kerries, who were white with rage, and it's themselves tickled the poor horse with their hurlies. "Faix he soon found 'twasn't a corpse he was handlin' that trip," exclaimed our own John O'Connell, who saw it all as he came home from short twelve, and a big prayer-book in his hand.

The hurling ground was black all around with people, and crowds poured in at the wickets. All thoughts were on the issue of the match. The applewomen bawled out in vain—"three a penny,"

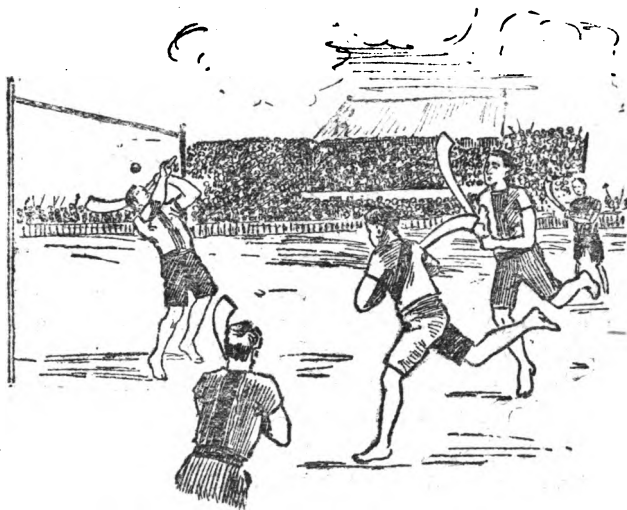


and two dogs left off fighting of their own accord, for want of an audience. Even the newsboys with a stop-press crying out: "Ten negroes skivvered alive in Colorado" weren't even noticed with their tasty bit of news. And when the two teams took the field there was electricity in the air.

Shouts of encouragement followed the brawny bouchals as they strode forward, bearing the honour of their county, and knowing full well that anxious hearts awaited the news in Cashel or in Caherciveen. And when the play began you could have stolen the starch out of any man's shirtfront in the crowd and he wouldn't have noticed it, so glued were his eyes on the field. Every time the ball got near the net, a shout began from the backers of that side, only to die out as the ball careered back again from the goal-keeper's hurley. Such running, such scrimmages, such banging of camáns. One man's hurley slipped from the wielder's grasp, as he made a powerful hit, and it sailed away down towards Drumcondra: it has been stated on good authority that it stopped on its flight only on coming into contact with the artistic poster of the *Catholic Bulletin* at Shanley's corner, Richmond Road. Inside half-an-hour the tension of the crowd had become tremendous, for Tipperary was two goals and Kerry two goals and two points—every goal and every point being cheered triumphantly by the respective crowds.

The people were all down against the fence, for the last struggle was working up to the hour. Some sharp remarks drew sharp retorts here and there.

A Thurles man was giving a great cheer. "Shut your gob," says a Killorglin man to him—"do you want the world to see your dinner!" "Don't be squeeling like a rat in a thrap" was the reply, evidently a reflection on the musical ripple of the South.



The ball bounded off the goalkeeper's noddle into the net

All the bile in the crowd was stirred by the contest. Staid old men who had been in Dublin for thirty years, money-making, felt the love of their county rising in their veins.

Just then a hurler from Toomevara gave the father of a puck at the ball, but hit a clod instead and sent it down into the net. A great cheer arose

from the Tips, and I tell you they were ropeable with wrath, when they saw what had happened.

But the next time the same boy from Toomevara—one of the Bourkes—made a wipe, and hit the ball which bounded off the goalkeeper's noddle into the net. Up went the flag and the Tips had won the day. Talk of a shout—it shook the elements. Chaps on roofs and fences and trees and walls were waving sticks and hats. And one man was hanging on with a foot and a hand to the water-shoot of the grand-stand. His tie was around under his left ear ; he was hatless ; his eyes were protruding with triumph ; his face was vicious. In a lull of the cheering, his voice strong as the bellow of a buffalo, yelled out : “ Three cheers for gallant Tipp'rary.”

The crowd looked up and to their amazement saw that the distracted enthusiast was none other than Jeremiah Dwyer, *Citizen of Ireland*.

As the crowd poured out at the gates, many noticed a tall, fair and stately girl wearing the Tipperary colours and smiling beamingly. She was evidently waiting for someone.

## A Romance without Love



HE Rev. Dr. Sheridan was a born scientist and he looked it. The monocle which his left eye-brow gripped caused a facial twitch both perky and penetrating, and stamped him at once as a virtuoso of no mean calibre. His clothes suggested by their symmetry the angles and curves of Euclid. But mark it well : Dr. Sheridan was no laboratory recluse but a student of Nature. In consequence, his face had not that pallid parchment-like appearance that tells of protracted vigils and midnight oil, but rather the ruddy glow and expansiveness of the enthusiast.

It was, however, in his eyes that genius shone with no uncertain light. His small black beady eyes glinted with intellectuality, and when he focussed his vision on an object the ocular rays converged to two needle points from which there was no escape, and indeed he found full play for his academic talents in the great open book of humanity. He loved to solve the secrets that lie concealed behind the countenance of man ; to trace the character revealed in the facial lines of all he met ; to

prognosticate the future in the curved nose or the criminal mouth ; and in the solitude of his own soul he allotted to each his likely destiny, failure or success, the gallows or the bench.

His happy hunting ground for specimens was the tram, in a corner of which he sat darting furtive glances to right and left—glances which were not always appreciated. Mamas were delighted at the gaze of absorption which he bestowed on their babies, and thinking it was fondness for children that moved him took care to keep the tiny features visible. The doctor's severe scrutinising eyes, however, disconcerted them eventually, and the mamas, thinking some detail had been forgotten in baby's toilet, applied a handkerchief to the unoffending cherub, who usually resented the attention by a protracted howl. Civil servants, too, who had forgotten to change their collars were convinced that the doctor's glance had found the sombre spots, and winced visibly ; and young ladies removed particles of possible egg from their lips and cowered before his critical observation. In fact that monocle of Dr. Sheridan's, full many a time, caused discomfort to the travelling public who little suspected that in the process their very souls were being surveyed and their inmost secrets read. But the worm will turn, for on one occasion a bellicose navy man with a tomato-tintured nose on which grew grog-blossoms in gay profusion "felt" the monocle playing on his features, and the volcanic soul of this son of Neptune erupted in fiery words: "What in thunder are you staring

at?" From that out Dr. Sheridan modified his zeal and conducted his observation with furtive caution.

It is not surprising that Dr. Sheridan's private



Rev. Dr. Sheridan

apartments proclaimed his tastes, for on the walls and on the mantel-piece were ranged photographs of distinguished or notorious persons; also pictures cut from evening papers of desperadoes and their

victims ; of musical composers with shaggy manes, and close-cropped convicts, too, with lowering brows. On these he discoursed with an easy volubility to his chosen friends—students like him of human nature in its peaceful or in its savage moods.

But surely the enemies of a man are those of his own household. His fellow curates had little sympathy with science as interpreted by their versatile companion. They ridiculed his conclusions with an irony akin to pity. His parish-priest above all was caustic, and unfeelingly remarked on more than one occasion that "a little common sense is not a bad thing now and then." For Dr. Sheridan had often regaled them with the fruit of his observations among the passers-by, and forecasted gloomy futures for many of the edifying parishioners. In fact, on one occasion the curate, Fr. Kelly, opening the front door in the absence of the maid, ushered in a gentleman of learned mien who asked to see the distinguished clerical scientist who lived in that presbytery, as he wished his opinion on the careers which he would recommend his children to follow. "Distinguished, my grandmother!" replied Fr. Kelly in a rage, and left the visitor standing in the hall.

Dr. Sheridan missed no opportunity of adding to his experiences among all sorts and conditions of humanity, and it was with a pleasurable sensation that he read an invitation on a gilt-edged card one morning to be present at a little concert given in a Home down the country for mentally deficient

ladies, and superintended by a kind and courteous lady named Mrs. Noonan. He knew that in this Home ladies whose nerves and minds were unhappily unhinged, were temporarily detained. Hither, then, the dual attraction of scientific observation and an entourage of social distinction, brought the learned Doctor, punctual to the moment. But he came prepared. Such a golden opportunity must not slip, for he believed in his inmost soul that he might be able to confer the boon of mental health once more on some of the afflicted, and that he could show that, after all, others might be only suffering from mere aberration of genius. So he brought his pocket Kodak, no bigger than a bull's eye, which emitted at a given moment a flash of light, and the snapshot would then and there be taken. He could study the photographed pictures at his leisure in the laboratory, and suggest a course of treatment.

The concert-room was a blaze of light and flowers, and those patients who were well enough were present; and here and there ladies of rank and fashion, invited by the matron, sat among the audience. The absence of cold officialdom, the all-pervading sense of home, made Dr. Sheridan almost forget the noble object of his visit, which was to make observations among new types of an altogether distinct class of humanity. Brains and breeding Dr. Sheridan adored and instinctively recognised, so he chatted gaily with two ladies of culture and travel who were among the visitors.

From his point of vantage our clerical scientist



could survey a row of patients, and note the contour of their faces and the angles of the cheek-bones which were indeed the main fulcra of his particular system.

It was for him a privilege beyond words to observe the fluctuating emotions caused to those semi-eclipsed intellects by the choice and versatile items of the programme. They seemed to enjoy it all. They lit up as with a ray of sunshine when a typical Irish colleen with a classical head and raven hair appeared on the stage and sang the Kerry Dancers, in silvery, exhilarating tones: when the fay-like accompanist in gleaming silk and glistening necklet flitted here and there with the suddenness of a fire-fly: when the funny man told how "his ears were so keen that he could hear his mother-in-law changing her mind"; that "the chops he had for breakfast in his lodging were 'unapproachable'"; and when he asked his butcher, "How are sausages?" the latter replied, "very well, thank you, they've taken the ham out for a walk"; and when the comedian rolled off some of his refined and artistic songs, the poor patients on whom Dr. Sheridan kept his eye demonstrated their appreciation in claps and laughter. The varying moods of the row of patients were carefully observed by our scientific friend and he had, so to speak, to multiply himself to keep up with the flow of delightful chat of his lady friends who sat beside him, deeply interested in his investigations. One added to his store of knowledge by descriptions of Eastern travels and, oh! joy supreme, the other invited

him to pass a week next summer in her castle in Austria. But Science, above all, held sway over his soul that evening; and when an unusual outburst of applause put the row of patients off their guard, Dr. Sheridan's bull's eye Kodak flashed and they were successfully snapped.

Dr. Sheridan's satisfaction was unfeigned. He had material to work on now for many a day, and already foresaw revelations which would set the world agog and make the Lombroso school green with envy. And when the curtain dropped on the evening's entertainment, he shook hands warmly with his new-found aristocratic friends who stayed in the hall, most likely, to congratulate the performers.

As he walked along the corridor, preceded and followed by knots of visitors, he recounted to Mrs. Noonan, the matron, the success of his diagnosis, and, unlocking the Kodak, handed her the photo of the row of patients who all showed out to life.

"My God," trilled the matron, "these aren't the patients at all, these are the nurses you have photographed. Musha, Doctor, you haven't an ounce of sense. I thought you were a great judge of human nature, I don't like to call you an omadaun. These girls you have snapshotted have more sense than yourself."

"B-B-But those distinguished ladies whom I was conversing with made no comment," quavered Dr. Sheridan.

"And why should they, the poor creatures? I thought you were a connoisseur in these matters.

What brought you in among them at all? Why didn't you wait to be shown your place by one of the nurses? The two ladies you were talking to have hallucinations. One thinks that she's the Empress of Austria; the other imagines she's Madame Blavatsky the theosophist. Didn't she tell you about the East, and didn't the other invite you to her castle?"

The poor crestfallen Doctor crumpled the photo in his hand and let it drop behind his back, but the eagle-eye of Fr. Kelly who was on his trail descried it, and soon flattened it out again and saw the whole case and hastened, as he swayed with laughter, to the nurses' private tea room. Fourteen of them were around him in an instant and shrieks of laughter rocked the rafters. In came the head-nurse looking daggers. "Dr. Sheridan took us for patients," says one. "No wonder for him, I never heard such an uproar as you're all making." But the head nurse joined in the chorus of merriment when she saw Dr. Sheridan's error; and the general boisterousness swelled to a higher key, when Fr. Kelly sat on a plate of jelly on the sofa.

The kind-hearted matron devoted her attention in the refreshment parlour to the discomfited and silent Doctor, persuaded him to have some tea, and put him no more crucial question than "How many lumps, Doctor, dear?"

## From Bombay to Salthill



THE population of Bombay is about a million, and of these, twenty thousand only are whites. From this it will be readily understood that should an insurrection break out in which the coloured people would unite, half an hour's bloody onslaught would clear Bombay of its white population. The area of the city is comparatively limited when the number it is supposed to accommodate is considered. The native population is swarming everywhere throughout the city. They are as thick as flies on a fly-catcher. At night they seem to sleep everywhere—across the footpaths, on door-steps, and on all sorts of projections. Contrasted with Europeans, the needs of the natives are comparatively few, and consequently living is cheap. A mason only gets eightpence a day. It will come as news to many that John Bull is very anxious to keep the natives of India wedded to their particular forms of belief. The viceroy and the various governors intimated this on several occasions, to the intense dissatisfaction of all the godly ministers in the country. A shrewd old Scotch settler put

this policy in a nutshell for me, and explained its inwardness. Said he: "While the Indian stays in his own faith, he is content with a fistful of rice and a loin-cloth. But if he becomes a Christian he'll want a beefsteak and a dress suit, and this darned country can't give it to him." So John Bull can modify his missionary zeal when the exigencies of this world interfere with the kingdom of God, on which the virtuous John, as we all know, has a mortgage.

There is revolutionary trouble in India, and there will be more of it. It is not suggested that it would be a good thing for India to have charge of her own affairs: chaos and internecine slaughter might result therefrom. This revolutionary trouble is made by the educated classes. England sees that a great mistake was made in multiplying universities in India, but now the trouble cannot be remedied, and the country is overrun with young men who have honourably won their degrees. But there is no work for them. The Indian Civil Service provides snug billets for many English and Irish youths, and this aggravates the Indian, who is in every respect the equal of the imported official so far as qualifications for the functions of the particular post are concerned. When John Bull in his inexperience gave higher education to India he forgot that he was cutting a rod with which to beat his own back. The educated Indian—and to-day his name is legion—feels keenly the servile bondage of his historic and glorious land: feels the awful degradation to which his colour and his caste condemn

him. But caste is the bulwark of the British power in India. The many religious and racial constituent elements of the Indian population are so heterogeneous that nothing short of an extraordinary movement would weld them into unity. The incubus of thousands of years of tradition is upon the population. May it not be well that this is so? Would it be good for Western civilisation if there were a phalanx of hundreds of millions of disciplined warriors in India, strong in the pride of wealth, and ambitious for oversea conquests?

But the paralysis of caste is on India. Nor is its effect limited to the richer classes. It penetrates to the lowest strata of society. See the scowl of hatred with which a dusky native, arrayed in half a night-shirt, regards another of the same hue similarly appareled. When enumerating the causes of English disaffection, wounded vanity must be put down as the foremost. The Indian feels that he is despised by the white man. The Indian may have university degrees, and may be a perfect gentleman; but he is made to feel his inferiority, and is conscious that he is looked on as only a better class of nigger. At the risk of being unchivalrous it must be said that the English womankind resident in India are doing a bad day's work for the interests of the British Empire. They ostracise from society the coloured population: they help in the boycott of the black from social functions. Herein we see a great advantage which the Catholic Church has over the sects. The clergymen's wives of the various denominations very often carry on a policy

of pinpricking against the coloured ladies of the congregation. They do it socially with true and unerring feminine inspiration (or obsession), not through uncharitableness but because custom demands it and leaves them no alternative. The Catholic clergy are not hampered by this disadvantage, and are consequently great friends with everybody. As we mentioned the ladies at all, "what about dress?" says someone. Well, to a casual, untutored eye, European frockers are simply freaks compared to those of their dignified Indian sisters who can afford to dress. The Oriental lady never makes an object of herself. The Orientals have an innate dignity which accords most aptly with flowing robes, and their princely bearing and natural hauteur crown the effect. The Parsees, of course, are the richest section of the population, and delight in the gorgeous display of finery, consisting of the choicest patterns of silks and satins that wealth can purchase or eastern splendour suggest. The girls' day school in charge of the Sisters of Mercy, in Bombay, is a veritable flower-garden of Oriental fashion. Many of the Parsee girls come to school in carriages. The complexions of some of the pupils are as black as midnight, while others are brown, and their faces shine like polished mahogany. The result of the ensemble of colours, patterns and designs in their dresses is very picturesque.

Converts to Christianity are few and far between in India. It would mean social exile for a person to leave his form of belief and embrace Christianity.

It certainly is a remarkable phenomenon that youths of both sexes will pass ten or fifteen years under the tuition of nuns and brothers and priests, and yet be uninfluenced in their religious views. What, then, is the good of labouring in their midst, some one will say. The Jesuit fathers whose hospitality I shared and whose great kindness I was the recipient of in Bombay, explained the immense advantages resulting from Catholic education in India, apart from conversions: for all those who come under the influence of Catholic teaching know what the Church is and learn to respect Her. They afterwards become merged in the general population and occupy influential positions, and, if nothing else, give fair play to the Catholic Church, and dissipate the fabrications of bigotry and intolerance.

Visitors to Malabar Hill in the suburbs of Bombay will return to the city with a feeling akin to mal-demer. On Malabar Hill are situated the famous Towers of Silence, where the bodies of deceased Parsees are exposed on a grating to flocks of ravenous vultures which fight for their share of the human prey, to the accompaniment of raucous, fiendish screams. They sometimes carry fingers and toes and ears into the air, and the consequence is the watertanks are always covered over on Malabar Hill, and no housewife will leave the lid off the pot while these aerial contests are proceeding, because the chimneys are very large and straight.

The railway station in Bombay is considered the most beautiful in the world, as cheapness of skilled



and unskilled labour and readiness of material afforded unrivalled advantages for the erection of a peerless architectural structure. Although it is not "an anthem sung in stone or a poem wrought in marble," like the Duomo of Milan, yet the Bombay railway station is a marvel of solidity and marmorial lacework.

India for the Indians is a growing cult throughout that country. It seems as if God meant that this should be so, for Indian-born children of European parents, if kept in the city through poverty, are pitiable specimens of humanity, shrivelled, parched and stunted. Many of the coloured children have Irish names. I asked one child as black as the ace of spades what her name was. "Mary Anne Maloney," said she. It took an hour's soothing walk in a cinnamon-scented grove to exorcise the spirit of indignation which her reply evoked.

But, after all, colour is only skin deep, for if we eliminate from the sum of human thought the contributions of tinted thinkers the world will be the poorer. But if you have a penchant for the sensation of surprise, walk out the Salthill Road from Galway, and the chances are you will meet the well-behaved, well-dressed, handsome, gentlemanly Osmund from Africa, whose pearly teeth are like a flash in circumambient blackness. Say to him, "An bfuil Saebits agat?" and you will get a reply mellowed with mellifluous blas, "Mairead, tá go veimín, agur neart." No wonder Osmund's programme is full up before he is five minutes in a ballroom.

## Patsy Casey's Christmas Box



**I**T had been raining in Dublin almost incessantly for three or four days, and there was no going out except for those who had to earn their living. This period of imprisonment was especially hard on the poor children of York Street, because the street is their only playground. Of course, there is not much space for play in a room, and several of the families in that once aristocratic locality have only one room to live in. It may be the "two pair back" or the front drawing-room, but it is only one room in spite of its grand name or its numerical designation. But there are grades of imprisonment, be it known, and those children in York Street who live in a house rejoicing in the proud distinction of a locked hall-door are pitied by those children who inhabit a tenement whose hall-door is never shut by day or by night, winter or summer, because these children even on wet days can make surreptitious excursions into the street to enjoy having their poor rags saturated. Of course, this proceeding pleases no one but themselves and the arch-fiend—that, no doubt, being the reason why it is delightful to them. Anyway, not to wander, it so happened one

December morning that after three or four days' incessant rain the sun came out over Dublin, including York Street; and out of front windows and back windows poles protruded on which hung clothes of every colour and shape—except the shape of a human being or any division of him, for some of the duds seemed to belong to an octopus, which reputation credits with eight arms—they are also called legs. It certainly was a credit to anyone to get these clothes off or put them on without destroying their unity. Some of the clothes had evidently been on the poor wearers during the wet days, and others were being gradually washed and hung out to dry in the sickly sunlight in order to spare the turf, which was a penny a sod, as the canal-boats were commandeered for the front with cargoes of that fuel from the Bog of Allen to smoke Von Kluckenshmell out of the Baltic. Well, that fine morning I am talking about brought happiness to the little children of York Street, for it meant liberation from bondage and a scamper through the streets over to Stephen's Green. Mutual attraction spontaneously formed a group of nine little pairs of bare feet of various sizes and varying grades of hard-mud encrustation, several toes of which were encased in rags. The mother of one had gone away to the turnip fields beyond Dolphin's Barn to earn a shilling, the mother of another, sad to say, was over at Green Street courthouse for *expressing* herself to the *polis*, and at least a dozen sympathetic women neighbours had to go to prove that she was as innocent as the

babe unborn. The mothers of others of the group cannot be accounted for at a moment's notice. But the unkempt little wandering company was happy as happy could be, and jumped about in exuberant glee, although a sup of black tea and dry bread was as much as most of them had that morning. They were as free as the birds of the wild woods, and the ones of seven and eight dragged along the ones of two and a half and three, between them, as these couldn't keep up to the cavalcade unaided. Talk of happiness and tell me that fine clothes, a full stomach, and money in your pocket make happiness. Indeed, these little arabs had none of these things and yet were happy. One of them was called "Bilin' Wather," because it was asserted that this formed a substitute for tea in his abode. Another answered to the name, "Custhard-Puss," because of the success with which he attacked a tart once given him by a kind old lady; the smallest little girl, aged two years and four months, was designated "Pigeon-Pie," through irony no doubt, for as soon as she could toddle she manifested a liking for turnip-tops and such like refreshments as lay on the flags and in the gutter before the greengrocer's in York Street. Her mother said that she took to her feet when she was eleven months, and was never any trouble except when once she got pewmonia and masles. She said she reared herself. The consequence was that the little mite's cheeks and nose were chronically embossed with mud, so much so indeed that when on one occasion, through some accident, her face

was washed, she was brought down the street in triumph by a bevy of urchins who cried out "Pidgie (short for Pigeon-Pie) has her face washed; Pidgie has her face washed." And Pidgie enjoyed the proceeding hugely and laughed accordingly, and several neighbours came to their doors and said that they never knew before that Pidgie was such a pretty little girl. Of course, Pidgie was with the group of nine that started down York Street that sunshiny morning. By rights she should not have been with them, for "Bilin' Wather," her brother of nine, was left in charge of her by the poor mother, who had gone away to work. Instead of minding her he started off with the rest down York Street, but if he did he had to come back for her, for she had toddled down the three flights of stairs, and sat down on the flags, and set up such a howl that public opinion was roused in her favour, and a driver of a bread-van, who was passing, threatened to cut "Bilin' Wather's" breeches off him with the whip if he didn't go back for his sister—and one more victory was recorded to woman's tears. So, Pigeon-Pie being duly incorporated in the battalion of adventurers, a general move was made down York Street, but a halt was soon unanimously made opposite the Miss Molesworth's house—one of the few decent abodes in the street; for these rigid spinsters' doggie, washed and combed, and wearing a blue ribbon with a tiny bell attached, was looking out of the window for himself, thinking of nothing and doing no harm to anybody. He wore a sad look, because he would

have preferred to be on the streets enjoying liberty. The nine immortals, of course, understood his feelings and put their heads through the railings, and then all, including Pigeon-Pie, poked out their tongues at Nelson, as the dog was called. This set him dancing with rage and barking furiously, and brought the elder Miss Molesworth on the scene, who took Nelson in her arms, and addressed soothing words to him, and shook her iron-grey ringlets menacingly at the nine rows of teeth that gleamed with joy through the railings. It was a success. They decamped. But why does Pigeon-Pie propel herself on her bandy legs on before the rest? Wait till you see. When the rascals were passing a certain big house farther down, Bilin' Wather and Custhard-Puss yielded to temptation, the objective being the large brass knocker on the hall-door. One jumped on the other's back and gave a murderous knock, and in an instant both were gone. Pigeon-Pie had got a good start, and the whole force effected a masterly retreat, knocking down on the flags with a bang, as they passed, the poster-boards outside the newspaper shop at the corner. Thus Stephen's Green was gained, and simultaneously Spider, nobody's dog, whose general address was York Street, arrived breathless, and bounded on before them. Spider never missed being with any expedition of ragamuffins on mischief bent, as he was always open to an engagement. When he saw the butcher's man setting out for Tallaght he went too, and helped to bring home the sheep; he often accompanied the greengrocer's

ass-an'-car to the market and barked proudly back into the ass's face as if he owned him, whereas he had no more call to him than you or I. Spider's lodgings were in the first open hall he met in York Street. He was mostly legs, as he had to live by his wits and run the gauntlet from all his enemies both man and beast. For all that, Spider was the neighbourliest dog in the world, especially if he



The whole force effected a masterly retreat

saw you eating anything, and maybe that's the reason he made such love to a little chubby boy, nearly three years of age, in gaiters and wraps, who was throwing cake to the ducks in the Green. His governess, in tailor-made costume, as stiff and as straight as card-board, on whose nose was perched a gold-rimmed pince-nez, was absorbed in a book on "Hygienics for the Million." She occupied a chair (id.) for she feared the microbes

left by rouseabouts on the benches. Spider simply adored that little boy, and planted his forepaws on his shoulders, and lathered him with his tongue through affection or to remove the crumbs of cake. The little boy got frightened. "Oh, he won't go near you," says Custhard-Puss, meaning of course that he wouldn't bite him, for he couldn't be nearer to him. At that the governess, Miss Mould, looked suddenly up. The sight of a street-dog licking her charge's countenance momentarily paralysed her. She gave a metallic shriek, and rushed the situation. "Oh, Janey Mack, she's mad!" said Custhard-Puss, and the crowd, preceded by Spider and followed by Pigeon-Pie, fled. The governess dipped her handkerchief in the lake, and douched the little boy's face, as a preliminary, and then whipped him into his gorgeous perambulator and speeded him to his home in Merrion Square. Poor little Lionel Hinton with his anæmic alabaster face was beginning to feel at home with the urchins and the dog. A race round the Green with them would have brought colour to his cheeks: he could then give vent to his glee at the sight of the funny fowl and their doings, but he dared not, for he, like many more, was a victim of that mirth-killing system which strangles joy in the budding soul and stems the innocent impulses of childhood to teach them restraint—if you please. Lionel Hinton, not yet three, had everything in this life but love. He had a palatial nursery all to himself in a splendid house; he had costly toys, he had the choicest of sweets. He was envied by poor children in his



furs and wraps and gilded pram, and yet his large baby eyes looked out with heart-pangs at many a child in its mother's arms covered up in a thread-bare shawl, its arm hanging out in the cold or rain and its head bare. Yes, Lionel Hinton envied those children, because they had something that he had not—a mother's love. He felt a void in his tiny being, and no wonder. His learned and accomplished governess, being an educational specialist, was a loveless machine who did her duty punctually and scientifically, and drew up a weekly report of her care's health for his father, the renowned Dr. Hinton. Lionel, after repeated warnings from Miss Mould to be cheerful and happy, was brought to him, superbly dressed, on Sunday mornings. The Doctor, who had an immense practice, had scant leisure even on Sunday mornings to do more than ask a few questions about his child and his progress, as Miss Mould had immediate charge of him—no nursery-maid being tolerated. Lionel, though son and heir, was imbued with great fear of his father by the governess: he never dared to cry within earshot of his father's studio; he was never brought into his august presence without being carefully combed and apparelled. He dared not call him "daddy," as the governess said that was vulgar. Nor was the void in the tiny boy's heart filled by his mother, for she was a lady of fashion, who had to see dress-makers, and make calls, and receive endless visitors. To be sure, she often, on her way to return a visit, popped into the nursery and, if Lionel's face were

neither soiled nor tear-stained, kissed him and asked if he ate and slept well. And she ordered toys for him: these she meant as a substitute for love, which she hadn't time for. Children and their cares and ills and their little world of likes and wishes were utterly irksome to Mrs. Dr. Hinton (happily a rare type) who lived for society, which welcomed her right royally, as she was young and rich and strikingly beautiful.

But wealth has no charms against disease. One morning Lionel could not breathe. His father is summoned. Yes, that fell disease, diphtheria, that had spread through the city in a fortnight, has the boy in its deadly grip. There is no time to be lost. It is an infectious disease. The ambulance is rung up. The child, rolled in blankets, is consigned to the red-shirted attendants, and away with the red-cross vehicle to Cork Street Hospital. But there is no private room. The danger is acute. Exposure would be fatal. And Lionel Hinton was placed in a corner of the general ward with other children similarly affected. The bed next to him contained a little Patsy Casey from the Coombe, only three months older than Lionel. The weary, dragging days and nights eventually passed, and one morning Patsy's awaking faculties were tickled at the sight of a child in the opposite bed sitting up with a red flannel pinned round his head and a big mug in his hand. Patsy laughed aloud. Lionel saw the picture, too, and laughed—the first hearty laugh of his life. Patsy and Lionel became friends then and there, and though their speech was

elementary, they talked. Their remarks were both inquisitive and autobiographical. Lionel was, however, more of a listener, for Patsy having had the run of the Coombe since he could toddle had a far more varied knowledge of life than Lionel, to whom the world was still a mystery. Patsy's father was a night cabman, and Patsy and the horse were great friends, because Patsy, with the assistance of Rover, the family dog, kept away the rats, while the horse, tired after his night's work, had his breakfast of oats. Patsy's excursions up the canal after breekens, which he caught in a tinny and brought home to a barrel in the back yard, made Lionel's teeth water. But what surprised Lionel above all was that Patsy's mother and father used to bring him about with them on Saturday nights to see the shops. *Your own very father and mother?* said the unloved, uncared-for child in amazement. How Patsy's father used to give him rides in the cab when bringing home clover, and how he brought him a baby-rabbit from beyond Rathfarnham one day, and how his mother used always put him to bed and tuck him in, and how she stood crying at the door when he was put in the cab for the hospital, and said, "Patsy, me darlin', will you ever come back to me again?"—all this was quite a new world to Lionel Hinton, and he thought about it all and wished *he* was Patsy Casey.

One day they were told not to talk so loud, for at the other end of the ward, behind a partition, were some tiny, tiny girleens, very sick. Two of them had been convalescent and used to trot about

the ward, the larger leading the other by the hand. They also fed a red-breast, which came to the window-sill at meal-times and sang its gratitude to them in the black-trunked, leafless tree close by. The elder, aged three, relapsed and died. The nurse told the other children that she was going on a long, long journey in a beautiful carriage. Lionel and Patsy didn't know her name, but that day they saw at the door of the ward a poorly-clad woman, without hat or shawl, who had rushed up the stairs in a hurry and was being gently kept out by a nurse, and she kept saying. "Poor Pidgie, my poor Pidgie is gone." Yes, it was little Pigeon-Pie, and she was dead. The day after, the other little companions in the ward heard the creaking of a carriage on the gravel and they stood up in their cots and clapped their hands and said Pidgie's carriage had come for her to go on a long journey—for these mites knew nought of death. And when the lovely black horses, as they said, and the silvery carriage moved away, the little ones waved their hands and cried out: "Good-bye, Pidgie; good-bye, Pidgie. Come back soon." But the robin knew better than these tots what it all meant. So he flew from bush to bush down the avenue before the horses and then flew over the houses to the graveyard and waited in an ivy copse near the fresh-dug gravelet. And when all was over and the crowd, including Pidgie's York Street playmates, was gone, and the weeping mother was borne away by friends, and everything quiet, the robin sang a sweet song, for he knew that

the little hand that used to throw him crumbs was still. But why was it not his winter song he sang that dark December eve? Try as he might it was the song of Spring. The robin knew not why, but we can guess the reason. Pidgie had gone to where she will have a clean shining face for evermore.

Of course it was an imposition on the little girl aged two and a half that didn't die, to tell her that Pidgie would have wings where she had gone to; that she would be like a beautiful white bird, for this led the scrapeen into making herself ridiculous to the more grown ones. For a big sea-gull happened to stand on the chimney of the outhouse near the ward the following morning, and the aforesaid scrapeen in the matter-of-fact way of two and a half considered that the bird must be Pidgie. So scrapeen demanded from the sea-gull the whereabouts of a certain toy. The unjust accusation evidently disgusted the bird, for he flew away. Of course, Lionel and Patsy said that she had no sense. They must have heard someone saying this, for, to tell the truth, they had very little more sense; their minds were just only dawning into reason, and had not got as far as the why and wherefore of things. Patsy was bursting with joy as the day approached when he was to go home; Lionel was quite unmoved. He knew nothing better than mechanical care, and home meant very little to him. But when his father, the Doctor, who looked care-worn and overworked, came to see him and said he was fit to leave the hospital, Lionel begged to pass by where Patsy

Casey lived, for he had heard such wonderful things about it. And the day eventually came, and Patsy's father, standing by his cab, was waiting, and a gorgeous motor waiting for Lionel, and Miss Mould in it. Patsy absolutely kissed the old horse who was doing his best to keep awake after a hard night, and Rover the dog took a piece off Patsy's father's coat with joy, and then shook the piece as if 'twas a rat. And you should have seen the look on the chauffeur's face, and he glistening in oil-cloth, when Miss Mould told him to *follow the cab* to the Coombe. Mind you, that chauffeur had a Piccadilly certificate. Rover the dog led the way and took a mouthful of hair out of O'Rourke's cat as she crossed the road from Hogan's hayloft. She escaped with her life, and ran up a spout, and used language. Of course, half Cork Street was out in its usual *dishabille* when they saw the procession of Rover, the cab and the motor. As it neared the Coombe, and it became known that Patsy Casey was coming home from the hospital, welcoming faces appeared at many a door, for, bless you, Casey's old night-cab had brought the nurse to many of them when it was a question of a new arrival. "Glory be to God, isn't he lookin' grand," said several voices as they scrutinised Patsy, who was in new clothes, for his old ones were burned at the back of the hospital—the Lord save us from harm, And when the cab arrived at the humble home, and Patsy had jumped into his mother's arms and she crying fit to turn a mill, of course all the other women cried,

too, and Mrs. Kelleher, the fishwoman, in wiping away her tears with the back of her hand adorned her countenance with several cod-scales.

"I thought I'd never see him alive," says Patsy's mother. "Arrah, have sense, woman," says Casey senior—who, of course, being a man, suppressed his emotion—"and get me me breakfast; meself and the oul' horse is famishin' afther the night." The horse, by way of seconding the resolution, looked around, although the winkers covered one eye, and he kept looking at them, as much as to say, "Are yez deaf?" Lionel saw the whole scene from his place in the motor, where he was sunk in cushions and covered in wraps. He would have loved to get out and stay there—yes stay there. And he cried when Patsy with his mother came over and said good-bye to him. "The poor little angashore!" says she to herself, "hasn't he e'er a mother?" By this time half the street, including the urchins of the neighbourhood, who seemed to spring out of the ground, were around the motor and its little occupant, but the chauffeur nearly crushed a dozen of them. Well for them they were used to dodging things. Said some of the women about Miss Mould: "She must be out of an Institution." And sure, 'twas true for them, for Lionel Hinton's mansion was not a home. True, his mother came to the door when she heard the buzzing of the motor and felt a motherly flutter round her heart when she saw her boy, but before kissing him she was assured by Miss Mould that all danger of infection had passed.

He was borne through the hall, past the open door of the drawing-room, where some ladies were having tea. They simply looked towards him for a moment, and the little sympathy-craving heart felt their cold stare. The poor child was haunted by the happy memories of Patsy Casey's homecoming, and he cried himself to sleep many a night, but was too young to analyse the cause. He got daily whiter and weaker. His father, the eminent doctor, became alarmed. His fears were shared by his wife. That boy—their only child—was the hope of the house. That death should dare to enter into their abode and snatch away the pride of the family was simply unthinkable. Yet he became worse. The father examined him and found no faulty organ, no physical symptom of decay. Full of apprehension, they both sat with him one night while he cried convulsively. They coaxed him to tell them why he wept, but he only wept the more. At length after repeated entreaties he said: "I'd rather be . . . little Patsy Casey."

"That's the little boy who slept near you in the hospital?" said the mother; "And why, darling; now tell me?"

"Because, because . . . his father and . . . his mother . . . love him," blurted out the child, half choked with sobs, and then the little heart seemed to break after unburdening its woe.

This reproof was the greatest blow the parents had ever got. It was the tiny hand of a child, yet it launched a thunderbolt that struck the parents speechless. They looked silently at each other.



The appalling stillness was broken only by the child's weeping. The world of their daily lives disappeared like vapour ; their world of business and fashion collapsed before their eyes. They felt themselves arraigned before God for neglect of their duty. Miss Mould, who stood in the doorway, evanesced like a film, and gained her room. The parents, each holding a hand of their little boy, stayed on with him through half the night. It was their act of contrition. They told him he should see Patsy on the morrow. They dried his tears, and he smiled under the glowing warmth of parental love, and fell asleep. They both knelt noiselessly beside the bed, and in sorrow and repentance for their forgetfulness, begged God to spare their boy.

\* \* \* \* \*

" My dear sir," said the eminent nerve-specialist, Dr. Beinkleider, to Dr. Hinton, the following day, " you are woefully run down. You have been burning the candle at both ends. Your system is absolutely unstrung. There is nothing, nothing for it, my dear sir, except perfect rest from duty for a month. You cannot go away to any health resort in winter, but take it easy. Shut up your laboratory, put your books in a press and throw the key into the Liffey. Your most deadly enemies are concentration and introspection. Externalise yourself, my dear Doctor. Study the map of human nature. Go for leisurely walks. Distract yourself. Talk with this one and that and unbend your mind. Relieve the tension on the brain for a month or so."

And Dr. Hinton, eminent physician though he was, allowed himself to be prescribed for. While his wife took Lionel for rides on the top of trams, the Doctor, who had appointed a *locum* to do his work, walked leisurely about the city and visited the most democratic suburbs. One night he took his place in the Ballybough tram and admired the spick and span young conductor just up from the country. At the next stop a well-preserved lady in widow's weeds entered carrying several parcels and looking very alarmed. "Oh, sir," said she to the conductor, "an awful thing is after happening up in Francis Street. A man ruz a hatchet to his wife an' left her for dead; then he done the same to his six childer' one after another, an' the place is runnin' wud blood." The passengers were horrified, Dr. Hinton included. The conductor forgot several stops so absorbed was he in the details, and the tram flew on past Summer Hill. The lady suddenly jumped up: "I must get out here," said she, "ring the bell." And out she got. But the hard-faced inspector of tickets boarded the car. "Tell me," said he to the conductor, "did that faymale pay her fare?" The conductor hesitated, got flustered, and said she didn't. "Y're very clever chaps," snapped the inspector at him, "comin' up from the country wud yeer cap on three hairs an any oul' Dublin woman can humbug ye. That's an oul' practitioner that's after gettin' out, an' you're not the first she's had wud her yarn about a murdher in Francis Street. The like of yez'll bankrupt the company if yez don't look sharp."

This was quite a revelation to Dr. Hinton, who never believed that such people were in the world. He enjoyed it. Of course, he and the other passengers were quite relieved to know that no awful tragedy had taken place, and the poor conductor straightened his cap on his head and looked foolish as a titter went round the compartment at his expense. The Doctor literally thawed in this democratic society in which he found himself and conversed affably with those near him. He alighted at the terminus, and walked briskly on, but was overtaken by a man of slightly shabby apparel, who, in a spirit of *camaraderie* which no cultured person could resent, opened an impromptu conversation as he walked along with the Doctor.

"What I blame the Government for, sir," said the new-comer, "is that they are not solidifying the bulwarks of the Empire with that efficiency and foresight which have characterised our policy for two hundred years. Have we, sir, I ask, attended with befitting concern to the extraordinary expansion of our over-sea dominions? However, we can rely on our imperial resourcefulness and take pardonable pride in the refrain: 'Britons never shall be slaves.'"

The Doctor, warmed by this enthusiasm, waxed eloquent, and they conversed for the whole length of the street on the congenial theme of Britain's glorious future. They had become fast friends in five minutes, and when they arrived before the door of the doctor's destination he extended a cordial hand to the stranger, who in fact held the

hand and said in almost a confidential whisper, in tones vibrating with feeling: "I want to take one shilling home to me wife." How could the doctor refuse? He felt he had been done brown, but as he walked up the steps to his host's door he laughed. "Confound it," said he, "but the fellow is an artist." The doctor was always a generous man and forgot all about the shilling and reaped his reward when a few evenings after he fell in with an old military pensioner, who was peddling bootlaces at Ringsend. He had been in India and had had varied experiences among the Goorkas in the old days. But his jungle life was a romance, for he knew the habitat and name of every animal that roamed the forest wilds. The doctor was a distinguished naturalist and had read several papers in the Royal Academy. Who does not recall his contribution to science in the article, "Do Corncrakes migrate or do they bury themselves during winter?" (3rd edition, Nown & Brolan). He took out his note-book and jotted down the main features of the old pensioner's detailed account of a ferocious hyena that in the old days was the scourge of Hyderabad. Happily that note-book fell into our possession at the late auction at Nanna & Heels, and the account is there verbatim:

"We wus camped (said the old pensioner) on the heights of Hyderabad when an Indian orderly brought in word that the double-jawed man-atin' hyanna used to come at a certain hour every mornin' to drink at a sthrimlet in the valley. We had heerd of that hyanna before. He used to

belong to a circus onest an' his special thrick, savin' your presence, was to blow his nose like a Christian; an' when blowin' it, his nose would give a whistle. Well, at the wreck of the *Bengal* on the Indian coast the circus was lost, but the ould hyanna swam ashore. He knew every inch of the jungle. He turned his eddication in the circus to good account, as ye'll see in the way he thrated us. He lay over in the hills. He knew that we had fourteen huntin' hounds, and what did he do? He blew his nose an', as I said, it whistled at the same time. Sure the dogs thought it was Colonel Spatts that was whistlin' for them over in the hills, and away they scampered an' nothing was found of 'em but their brass collars the day after."

Here the MSS. became blurred, but we can fill in from an eye-witness that the Doctor rewarded his informant liberally, and at the next meeting of the Academy read a paper entitled "The Double-Jawed Hyena of Hyderabad and his whistling powers," based on the evidence of Private Patt Mullarky, long resident in India. It seems that when the Doctor had read his paper a voice from the gallery cried out: "Patt Mullarky was never five miles from Portobello barracks. He got six months for desertin'. He's the biggest liar in Ringsend." However, the learned doctor was so absorbed in deciphering his paper, as the electric light was indifferent through the niggardliness of the then Corporation, that the rude interruption happily escaped him. What the proposer and seconder said we do not know, nor do we care, for

at Dublin lectures, the proposer and seconder talk three times longer than the lecturer himself and hang shreds of language on his points. But what we do know is that Dr. Hinton brightened many an hour which he and his wife and their little boy passed in the nursery. Incidentally, it may be remarked that Miss Mould returned to England, for in a confidential pow-wow with his mother one night Lionel said, "I don't like her." The following morning the doctor declared to the learned governess that Merrion Square was proving fatal to her health and judging by her looks he feared the worst. Wasn't Lionel glad when her bloodless fingers no longer tied the ribbons of his woolly cap under his chin. Nor was her voice the sweetest, as may be gathered from the fact that one day the charwoman in the area didn't reply to her expostulations on the plea that she, the charwoman, thought it was the master's gramophone was speaking.

As for Lionel, he was delighted when his father told him about the lady in the tram who paid no fare: and about the awful hyena that whistled for the dogs in Hyderabad. And to complete his happiness, Patsy Casey was brought over and spent hours in the nursery with Lionel over the costly playthings he had, the insides of which they frequently explored. And what is more, Lionel's own parents promised to take him and Patsy through the city on Saturday night, which that year was Christmas Eve. Did they go round Fitzwilliam Square or through Grafton Street? No, I don't think. What's to be seen there? But they went

down Mary Street. Such a crowd going every way an' over an' hether. The shops were all ablaze and nearly every woman was carrying a baby in her arms and dragging two or three by the hands and searching for the fourth. Beautiful bannerettes for a penny were waved aloft by girls on the kerbstone, and paper flowers with almost a fragrance off them—you'd think they were out of Beccles Street hothouse—were to be had for next to nothing. A crowd up near Mary's Abbey, however, seemed excited, for two men who should be packed off to the front were squaring at one another very belligerently. One of them had a glass eye and it fairly mesmerised the other fellow for it kept turning. At last it revolved altogether in his head, and turned its green side out. Well, I tell you when the light shone on it it looked like a blob of burning sulphur; and the other man couldn't take his eyes out of it and was struck motionless like. "Girrout," says the man with the green glass eye, "you can't fight"; and he plucked out his glass eye and hopped it off the forehead of the other man, caught it on the rebound and replaced it in the gaping socket. "Girrout," says he, "you can't fight a man." And he put his hands in his pockets and walked away, while the crowd gaped in terror and amazement. Sure he was a play-actor out of a travelling peep-show that's up in Little Britain Street—front seats three halfpence; the pit a halfpenny; two children in arms counted as one, but you'd have to carry them out when the lion devours the countess, fearin' they'd

scream. At least such was the announcement that the sulphur-eyed pugilist casually made as he walked proudly off. He wouldn't be so proud out of himself if he knew that there were people out of Merriion Square present, I'll go bail. But such is the instinct of hero-worship that even great people feel it, and sure enough the eminent doctor and his wife and their little boy Lionel in gloves and podgy gaiterettes accompanied by little Patsy Casey—both walking on in front—struggled their way up to the vacant allotment in Little Britain Street where the Peep Show was. You paid your money and you got your peep and there was a chap there to pull you back by the coat-tails (if you were a man) if you wanted to stay longer than your threehalfpence—for the front seats got first look. Well, it was Christmas time, when there is plenty of "thratin'," otherwise why would the gentleman who explained the pictures go so far astray as to say: "Look to the right and ye'll see Napoleon crossing the Alps in an open boat?" But the showman came to himself when the great picture of the night came on. "Ye see before ye, ladies and gentlemen, Daniel in the Lion's Den, and the way yez'll know the holy man from the rest of the lions, he has a sword in his hand." It may be observed that Daniel was adorned with a profusion of hair to add to his dignity. The entertainment was worth the money and more, and the man of the green eye—'twas now crosswise—acted various *roles* as well as usher-out. Says he to a man that was bumping people as they went out:



"Why don't you look where you're goin'?" And, says the man back, glancing at the cross-eye: "Why don't *you* go where you're lookin'?"

Did our friends leave out Thomas Street and the half a mile of fowl of all ages and sizes and pedigrees with long legs and bloody heads and rags tied on some of them? Of course they heard what Mrs. Cody from Inchicore said to the woman from Clondalkin, who was sitting on the shaft of her cart, and the horse's head in a bag alongside—says she viciously: "Mrs. Carroll, ma'm, you must be tired blowin' up yer geese wid a bellace to make 'em look big. Last year as soon as me man put the knife in the oul' goose we bought from you there kem a blast out of her, ma'm, that'd blow off yer hat, an' yer bally oul' goose withered up on the plate, ma'm, like a paper bag." But of course our friends passed on and paid no attention to the rejoinder of the accused lady who, it may be surmised, having been several years selling fowl, was able to give an account of herself.

As it was drawing late the happy party made a move for Merrion Square, where Patsy's father with a brand new cab, a present from the Doctor, awaited his little boy to take him home to the Coombe. Of course, Dr. and Mrs. Hinton brought him in and made him a hot one, which, it need hardly be said, he couldn't take at one gulp, as per usual, but had to sip it. Urged by his hosts, he became reminiscent, and, says he: "It's many a quare person is in the Coombe, which reminds me of Ned Holohan who was gone mad on coursing

matches. Well, there was one to be held up behind the Hell Fire Club one Sunday morning not so long ago, an' Ned hadn't a stiver to pay the train-fare to Dundrum—the nearest station. But he heard Fanagan's men sayin' that the Widow Corcoran's son of Dundrum would be getting buried that same Sunday morning, for they were to take out the coffin. Ned said nothing but got in the back way to Fanagan's yard, an' sure enough the coffin was in the hearse ready to go out first thing in the mornin'. What did me brave Ned do but get into the coffin and put the lid on himself and fell asleep nice an' comfortable, and never felt till he was woke up by the jolting of the hearse in the morning, half ways to Dundrum. But he didn't know where he was when the hearse stopped a while after that. Sure enough it was opposite Mr. Lardner's public house—none o' yer loop-line pubs where they sell pints for three halfpence, but a real respectable place. The undertakers had gone inside, for they weren't sure of the road and they wanted to inquire. Ned, inside in the coffin, wondered at the silence, so he lifted the lid and looked out. Who was standin' watchin' the coffin but Jack Minogue from Carrickmines, an oul' bona fida who came looking for a drink that Sunday morning. When he saw the lid of the coffin risin' and a man's eye lookin' out, Jack let one roar that woke up Dundrum and brought out the undertakers wipin' their lips. 'The dead man is alive, the dead man is alive,' yelled Jack, pointing at the coffin. Mr. Lardner himself ran out. 'Get

away, you old bona fida,' said he, 'you've got e'm again,' meanin' the jigs. As the village, half-dressed, began to gather round the hearse, the undertakers drove off, but Jack followed closely with his hat off an' he roarin': 'The dead man is alive. The dead man is alive.' But Ned never budged in the coffin until they got to Brody's Hill where there's another public house. The undertakers had to go in an' inquire again about the road, an' me brave Ned slipped out of the coffin and had a grand day at the coursing match."

The merry laughter of little Patsy and Lionel, who were sitting on the carpet before the fire, mingled with that of the grown-ups at Ned Holo-han's adventure. By this time the drop in Casey senior's glass had got cold and, as it was nearing twelve and Christmas Eve, the bells of Westland Row had begun their preliminary bars like a lady coughing before a song, and Mr. Casey had to take another hot one before leaving.

"Them bells remind me," says he, "of what happened not so long ago at St. Patrick's Cathedral, beside the Coombe. The bellman who was as old as a field an' as grey as a badger wouldn't let anyone up in the belfry, and a few of the boys of the Coombe determined they'd best him. So two or three of them invited him over to McCall's one Christmas Eve to have a sniffther. He went. What did three or four more of them do but get into the belfry and bar the door and start to ring the bells that you'd think the tower would tumble. One of them could play tunes, so he up wid 'The

West's Awake,' an' 'God Save Ireland,' on the big bell. All Patrick Street ran out on the street. Says Mrs. Murphy, lookin' up at the bells: 'I've been in Patrick Street for sixty-one years and I never thought yez had anything in yeer stummicks but Martin Luther's psalms an' 'The Dead March,' an' now, glory be, but yeer playin' religious music.' Sure 'twas 'The Peeler and the Goat' the bells were playin'. The bell-ringer, when he heard it, didn't finish his pint, but the boys held him down an' sat on his chest. Fourteen polis rushed up and were batherin' at the belfry door to get in when me brave Pat Quigley to draw them off roared out up the street: 'Three cheers for Paul Kruger and the Kaiser!' and the fourteen started in pursuit, an' the boys slipped out an'——" Here the Westland Row peal interrupted Mr. Casey and rang out the *Adeste Fideles*, and he drained his glass, and with tears in his eyes he prayed God to bless Dr. Hinton, his lady and his child.

"And you and yours, too!" said they, most cordially. The little boys whom Fate had first thrown together in Cork Street Hospital parted affectionately. His parents accompanied Lionel to his nursery and kissed him to rest. On the floor were costly toys, motor-cars, pewter soldiers, steam-engines, and aeroplanes from uncles and aunts.

But the choicest present of all, beside which the rest were as nothing, was a father's and a mother's love. This was the Christmas Box which little Lionel Hinton of Merrion Square got from his friend—little Patsy Casey of the Coombe.

## The Blind Organist



**HAVE** you ever heard of Francesco Santi? Well, years and years ago, he was well-known as the blind organist of Seville, and there was great rivalry among the fashionable churches as to which of them would secure his services as organist. And yet, strange to say, he was poor, but so pious that people used to say that he never felt his poverty. He could have been much better off, but no reward could induce him to leave the old, old church of Santa Caterina, and his dear old organ there, on which he and his ancestors had always played, and which he called his only friend in the world. He had no relations but one daughter, still a little toddler, and his dearest and only wish was that she should one day succeed him as organist in Santa Caterina, and perpetuate his family name and fame, for Francesco was known throughout the whole of Spain as a renowned organist and great musical genius.

But he was stone-blind and had been so since his birth; yet he knew every note and stop and pedal of the organ, and indeed the organ seemed to know him, and interpreted the emotions of his

inmost soul. He was once asked what he would give to have his eyesight, and he replied, "a great deal surely, but not so much as you think, for I have hope." "The hope to see?" queried his friend. "Yes," he said, smiling, "the hope one day, and perhaps soon, to see the good God in heaven."

The poor man! Yes, truly, he will see God, for he is as humble as a stone on the highway on which everyone may walk. God bless him; he can bring heavenly music out of the organ, but never sweeter or more glorious than on holy Christmas night. He loved the midnight Mass above any other celebration in the Church during the whole year, and when the priest was at the Elevation, when our loving Saviour is born mystically on the altar, the organ seemed to give forth the angelic song of the first Christmas night long ago. No wonder the people came in crowds on Christmas night to Santa Caterina. They came hours before the Mass began, rich people, poor people, and musical critics, for they said, "it won't be Christmas night at all if we don't hear Francesco's *Adeste*."

They came in crowds, and the gay and laughing groups that sang along the streets or played guitars, became as silent as the grave as soon as they entered the church and heard the strains of Francesco's organ; and when the music of the Elevation ceased, a sigh of intense devotion arose from the adoring multitude. But let us enter the church, for the Mass is about to begin.

The church is splendidly lighted. A flood of

light comes from the high altar, where a thousand huge candles burn, and is reflected in the glistening jewellery of the noble ladies who kneel in a semi-circle before the altar, while behind stand the nobles and the officers and high State officials in gala costumes and the gorgeous uniforms of their rank. Their breasts shine with decorations and medals. Behind them a sea of faces, and that great congregation surged and swayed like the sea. A murmur of pleasure arose when the Archbishop appeared and ascended the red-carpeted steps of the high altar, and blessed the multitude three times.

It was now time for Mass to begin. Some minutes passed by, and the celebrating priests were not appearing. The nobles whispered something to each other here and there, and the Archbishop sent into the sacristy to inquire the cause of the delay.

"Francesco is sick, very sick, and it will be impossible for him to play at the midnight Mass," was the answer.

The news went like a flash through the congregation, which had already begun to show impatience, and it would be impossible to describe their disappointment.

At this moment a tall, unkempt, awkward man came forward, and said to the Archbishop, "Francesco Santi is sick, and the High Mass cannot proceed. If your Grace will consent, I will play the organ in his absence; for he is not the first organist in the world, nor need this organ be silent for want of players in case he dies."

The Archbishop signified his consent. Some of those present knew that this stranger was an enemy of Francesco, and envied the great reputation of the blind organist, and began to manifest their dissatisfaction openly, when a commotion was heard at the door of the church. "Francesco is here; Francesco is here," and all eyes were turned towards the entrance. Francesco, death white, was being carried into the church in an arm-chair, and many hands were outstretched that they might carry it on their shoulders. The orders of the doctor and the entreaties of his daughter could not prevail on him to keep his bed.

"No," said he, "I cannot die without visiting my organ. I know that this is the last time, but, of all nights in the year, I must play it on Christmas night." Willing hands bore him up to the organ loft, and the Mass began. The great clock in the tower struck twelve.

The Introit, the Gospel, the Offertory were over, and the solemn moment was approaching when the celebrant would raise the Sacred Host. Clouds of incense filled the church. The Elevation bell rang out, Francesco's weak and withered fingers touched the organ notes. His illness is forgotten, and he seems young and strong again. The hundred voices of the metal pipes came forth in majestic accord; a wave of sound swept throughout the church, and died suddenly out like the last gust of a storm. It was as an appeal from earth to heaven, and in answer to it came a tone as if sounding in the distance, first gently, but gradually growing



and swelling till it became a cascade of celestial harmony.

It seemed as if angels' voices were bearing messages of peace and mercy from above. Then a wonderful melody seemed to come from immeasurable heights, like the chant of the choir of the Seraphim, singing a thousand intermingling hymns. Then, one by one, those tones died out, and only two voices remained answering each other; then, only one was heard as gentle as a moonbeam. The celebrating priest bent his knee, and raised the Sacred Host above his silvery head, and a column of blue incense rose slowly up above the highest altar lights, and spread like a veil over the sanctuary.

But hark; a cry of anguish from a little girl—Francesco's daughter—rang out from the gallery in the solemn stillness. The organ suddenly ceased. Crowds rushed towards the stair-case of the organ gallery. "What has happened? What has happened?" said countless voices, as the whole congregation looked up. A messenger left the choir, and proceeded gravely up the church, and told the Archbishop that Francesco was dead. His face was peacefully resting on the notes of the organ.

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Twelve months passed by, and Christmas night came again. "Are you going to Santa Caterina to-night, Senora Dona Baltasaraz?" said a noble lady of Seville to her friend. "To-night that strange man who wished to play the organ last

Christmas night will perform, and fame has it that he, too, is a genius. We must go." And the church was crowded as before. The same throng, the same fashionable people, the same nobility in the superb attire, and the whole congregation in great expectancy. The ungainly organist kissed the Archbishop's ring, and ascended to the organ loft ; but, oh, how rough and unharmonious was his music. The solemn moment of the Elevation came when stillness fell on that mighty throng. Then the bells rang out in crystal tones, and clouds of incense rose up like mists, and the organ pealed forth subdued soul-soothing melodies. No words suffice to describe the spell that bound the congregation. Musical sounds like gentle showers of pearls fell from the organ, the lower registers gave out a flood of sound like the rushing of a mighty river, and then subsided, and sweet sounds like the rustling of leaves kissing each other in the breezes of spring were heard amid the chorus of birds ; finally, the many voices of the organ spoke together in one accord, which, like a stream of light and harmony, arose from earth to heaven. And the delighted audience were moved to devotional tears, and many said : " It must be the spirit of Francesco ? " Suddenly, the singing of the choristers in the choir ceased. They glanced at the organist, and, oh God ! his hands hung by his side, although the organ went on playing without human hands. His eyes and mouth were wide open, and his face ghastly pale. He was helped from the seat. The Elevation was over, and the

music ceased. "Oh, take me hence," said he in tones of anguish; "take me hence."

*What did he see?* was the question which all Seville was asking the following day, and for many days after.

\* \* \* \* \*

For five years the organ was closed, and no organist in the length and breadth of Spain could be induced to play on it. Francesco's little daughter had grown up, and had become a brilliant organist, and great were the expectations of the whole city about her future. Christmas night came round again, and the church was thronged for the Midnight Mass, for it was said that Franceschina, as she was called, would play her father's organ. The august moment of the Elevation came. Enrapturing strains enchanted the congregation, for she had her father's genius and devotion. The worshippers were hushed in silent reverence by that music, as if angels' wings had rustled over them; the sinner's heart was softened, aged hearts grew young again, and wrinkled features became bright with rays of immortal hope, for Franceschina's music made them think of the angelic choirs above and "the bliss that waits us when we reach our home beyond the tide."

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And the people looked at one another, in an ecstasy of delight, and whispered, "the spirit of Francesco, the spirit of Francesco."

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